
THE
Delicate Distress,
A NOVEL.

Police District

NO. 1

11

THE
Delicate Distress,
A NOVEL:
IN LETTERS.

IN TWO VOLUMES.

BY FRANCES.

VOL. II.

L'amour ne peut jamais subsister, sans peine, dans une ame
delicate, mais ses peine mêmes, sont, quelquefois,
la source de ses plus doux plaisirs.

RECUEIL ANONYME.

DUBLIN:

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RECHERCHES ANONYMES
 IN FORCE DE LA PLUS DISTANCE
 DÉLÉGUÉ, MAÎTRE LA PAIX INDIENNE, LEON, DÉLÉGUÉ
 LEON ET LE PONT JAMAÏS INDIEN, LEON, LEON, LEON

D U B L I N :

1947

For the United States of America

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T H E

DELICATE DISTRESS.

L E T T E R I.

Lady WOODVILLE, to Lady STRAFFON.

I DO indeed, my dear Fanny, sincerely rejoice at the pleasing prospects which seem to open to your new friends; I also congratulate you on being in so high a degree instrumental to their happiness.—I think I may almost say, that Providence seems to interest itself in the future fate of the amiable Laura.

THERE is something very particular in your becoming accidentally acquainted with Lady Somerville so critically.—Had your meeting with this charming woman been deferred but a month longer, the connection between ye might, in all probability, have been only productive of unavailing good wishes, and mutual esteem;—but the lucky arrival of signior Lodovico, has made

you a principal performer in the great drama of Laura's life.

THOUGH not an absolute predestinarian, I am apt to believe that there is a sort of fate in marriage; and as one absurdity creates another, I find I must lean a little to the Manichean doctrine to establish my thesis; by supposing that there is a good and evil genius, which presides occasionally at that great crisis, on which all the colour of our future lives depend. I sincerely hope that Laura's union with the young Melespini, will be completed under the happiest auspices.—I do not feel one doubt arise in my mind, with regard to his father's consent.—The only cloud which I foresee to intercept the brightest sunshine, will arise from the separation of lady Somerville and Laura—but that like a cloud also will pass away:—for though the tenderest affection for a husband does not oppose the natural claims of parents or relations, on our hearts; it in some measure lessens their force.—Our hopes and fears are directed to another object; and self-love strengthens our attachment to that person on whom we find our happiness depends.

You see I have a passion for philosophizing upon every subject;—where incidents do not abound, it would be impossible to keep up even a monthly correspondence, without these little aids; I will not call them arts, for I detest the mean idea which is conveyed by that expression.

I SHALL be glad to have my expectations gratified, by hearing of the count's immediate concurrence with his son's inclinations.—In the mean time, I beg you to present my compliments to lady Somerville, and her fair daughter, and to assure them, that I regret my not having the pleasure of being known to them.—Fanny Weston is quite transported at the happy meeting of
Lodovico

Lodovico and Laura ; but says, she can so scarce believe it true, because it is likely to send so fortunately.

I CAN perceive that lady Harriet has doubts, with regard to the event ; but as she finds me sanguine on the subject, she suppresses them.—Sir James Thornton, with a sigh exclaimed, what an happy man is Lodovico, to find the object of his passion disengaged ! This has left me more in the dark than ever, with regard to his attachment, for I am pretty sure lady Harriet is not his object.

I CANNOT help remarking upon this occasion, how much the particularities of our own situation, affect our judgments with regard to others ; and how much more than we are willing to allow, our opinions are warped and biased by it, even in matters that appear indifferent to us.—Adieu, my Fanny !—True love from me and mine, to you and yours.

E. WOODVILLE.

L E T T E R II.

Lady STRAFFON, to Lady WOODVILLE.

MY dear Emily shall from henceforth be our augur.—Be her predictions fortunate, and be they ever verified !

THE wished for packet is at length arrived ; —it contained a letter for Lodovico, and one for lady Somerville.—The moment he had read his, which was fraught with congratulations from all his friends, and the most plenary indulgence from

his fond father, to his ardent wishes, he intreated me to go with him instantly to the cottage.—We almost flew there; and Lodovico in the highest rapture, acquainted lady Somerville and his loved Laura with the glad tidings.

LADY Somerville received the news with tears of joy; conflicting passions warred in Laura's face; gladness and grief took turns. The bright suffusion of her cheeks, the brilliant animation of her eyes, expressed her heart felt joy; but when she turned those eyes upon her mother, their radiance was obscured by starting tears; the transient roses fled from her fair cheeks, and left the lily mistress of the field.

LADY Somerville was affected by these sudden emotions, and retired to peruse her brother's letter.—She returned soon, and giving it into my hands, said with a sigh, by this you may judge if I flattered my brother by calling him the most generous of men. Alas! why must I appear unworthy of his kindness by declining it? but when he knows my reasons for so doing, I hope he will acquiesce in them and pardon me.

UPON reading the count's letter I found, that after testifying his joy at his son's attachment to Laura, he added, that it was from the mother's hand he hoped to receive the daughter; and conjured her, by the friendship that had ever subsisted between them, to return to her native country with her children, to hold the first place in his house, and to contribute by her presence, to restore that happiness, which had been deeply wounded by the loss of an amiable wife.

WHEN I had finished the letter, which I read aloud, I feel myself unhappy, said lady Somerville, in not being able to comply with my kind brother's request.—It is long, much longer than I thought it would be, since I devoted the rem-
nant

ant of my wretched days to solitude.—Here I have lived, and here will pass that portion of my life which heaven may yet allot me.

As she spoke, I thought I saw her expressive eyes fixed on her lord's picture, as if addressing her vows to him. But she had scarcely finished, when Laura, springing from her seat, fell at her mother's feet, and catching her hand, cried out, My more than parent ! is it possible your love for me should have so little power ! and could you part so easily with her, whom I have often heard you call the living transcript of your dear dead lord ? But Laura must not, cannot quit her mother ! all pleasing prospects vanish at that thought ; which makes the word appear even more a solitude than ever I found this cottage.

THE parent's heart was touched.—No, my beloved child, said she, I will not bar your happiness.—Since you desire it, I will again behold the fatal place which gave me birth, and even strive to lose the sad remembrance of my griefs, in your felicity.—I owe this sacrifice to Laura's filial tenderness.—What would my child have more ?

TEARS and embraces supplied the place of language, or rather superceded it for some time ; but when their emotions had subsided, the young pair expressed their joy and gratitude at lady Somerville's condescension in the most proper terms ; and the evening was spent in such a manner as could only be pleasing to those who are blest with feeling hearts.

THE count has accompanied his letter with a very noble present, to enable his sister and niece to appear as the widow and daughter of lord Somerville.—There is something above pride in that thought.

As Lodovico and I returned home, he entreated me to use my interest with lady Somerville, to consent to his being privately married by her ladyship's chaplain, before they set out for Genoa.—I think she can have no objection to this request.

I HOPE I shall be able in a few days to send my Emily an account, that this affair is happily concluded.

Till then, adieu.

F. STRAFFON.

L E T T E R III.

Lady STRAFFON, to Lady WOODVILLE.

WHEN the subjects are pleasing I find narrative writing not so dull as I once thought—I begin to fear I shall make but a poor figure in the epistolary way, when I have concluded my little novel; for I honestly confess that my dear Emily beats me all to nothing in the moralizing strain.—Sorry am I, on this account only, that I must now proceed to the denouement of my simple yet interesting story.

LADY Somerville desired two days to consider of Lodovico's proposal; at the end of that time she expressed her consent in a most elegant letter to me.—She said, that as she had on every occasion concurred with my requests, she hoped I would not think her too presuming to make one to me; which was, that I would accept of her cottage with every thing which it contained, except her lord's picture, and that with my permission she would fill its vacant place with Laura's portrait.

I WAS both pleased and distressed at her politeness and generosity.—I accepted her present.

—In

—In that charming sejour, I shall spend many hours in thinking of its amiable owner, and in reflecting on the inscrutable ways of Providence, who after so many trials has been pleased to restore this valuable woman to her country and friends.

SUCH characters as hers, were never meant to droop in obscurity; she owes herself to society, and will I hope recover some degree of that happiness she thinks totally lost, in the exercise of those virtues which in her retired state she could never be called on to exert.

SLIGHT as the preparations were for a wedding, which it was determined should be private, they took up every moment of our time till yesterday morning; when Lodovico, Lucy, Sir John, my little Emily and I set out together for the cottage before breakfast.—We were received by lady Somerville and the charming bride, with that graceful ease and politeness which is the result of good sense, and operates equally upon all occasions. After breakfast Sir John led Leura into the chapel. Lady Somerville presented her hand to Lodovico; the priest and altar were prepared; Sir John had the honour of personating Laura's father, and had the pleasure of completing Lodovico's wishes, by bestowing her hand where she had already given her heart. The fervour of lady Somerville's devotion was truly edifying; when the ceremony was over, she endeavoured in vain to suppress her tears; but they were tears of joy.

SIR John presented the bride with a pair of ear-rings, and a cross of diamonds, and I had the pleasure of placing my picture in a bracelet upon lady Somerville's arm. From the elegance of our dinner and supper at the cottage, I apprehend that lady Somerville is one of those extraordinary

ordinary characters who do not think that the most refined understanding or the most exalted sentiments, place a woman above the little duties of life.

THE new married couple are to dine with me this day. Sir John is gone to try if he can prevail upon lady Somerville to accompany them. Next week they set out for Genoa; they are to occupy our house in town, while they stay in London. May their voyage thither and through life be attended with prosperous gales! Amen, and adieu.

My dear sister,

F. STRAFFON.

L E T T E R IV.

Lady WOODVILLE, to Lady STRAFFON.

I SINCERELY congratulate my dear Fanny on the fortunate denouement of her pleasing and interesting narrative, and join in her good wishes for the happiness of lady Somerville and the new married pair.—As you seem inclined to rally me on my turn for moralizing I shall not exert it at present, though I think lady Somerville's story a very proper subject for it.

BUT to deal ingenuously, I have a stronger reason for declining to expatiate on it than what I have mentioned, which is my being stinted in time, as I am going to dine at lord Withers's, where we shall stay this night. On Thursday we are to dine at Sir William Lawson's, and Friday is fixed for our setting out for York.

THIS short letter will probably be the last you will receive from me till my return from thence. If I were superstitious I would not go
to

to York, as I cannot help feeling a kind of presentiment against it. Why did lord Seymour attempt to inspire me with this disgust? I will not reason farther upon the subject. "*Obedience*" is better than SACRIFICE; but pray is not that sometimes the greatest we can make?

AFFECTIONATE regards and sincere congratulations wait on the hosts and guests at Straffon-Hill, from all this house, and from

Your's most truly,

E. WOODVILLE.

L E T T E R V.

Lord WOODVILLE, to Lord SEYMOUR.

IN justice to those friendly apprehensions which you seem to suffer on my account, I think I ought to inform you, that the so-much dreaded event of an interview with the marchioness, is over without my being sensible of the least ill consequence from it. All lovely! all engaging, as she is! I had armed my *heart* with the remembrance of her former treatment; and though *the little rebel* did flutter at her sight, I think its emotions were rather the effect of resentment than a softer passion.

THE worst symptom I discovered in myself (I will be perfectly sincere) was my being piqued, at the composure of her air and deportment, when she first saluted me. Is it possible, Seymour, she can be really indifferent? or is it only the artifice of her sex, that makes her appear so?

As the room was very full, and she stood at some distance from me, before I could approach her, she was taken out to dance by lord Bellingham.—When her first minuet was over, she desired

fired I should be called out ; and though I felt the utmost reluctance to accept the compliment, it was impossible to refuse. I am certain I never acquitted myself so ill in my life. You have seen her dance, and therefore know that the eyes of the whole company, were engaged by her, and my confusion passed unnoticed.

As I led her to her seat, she wished me *joy*, and asked if the fair cause of *it* was in the room ? I answered yes.— She then intreated I would present her to lady Woodville, whom she longed to see more than any person in England ; as lord Seymour had told her that she was a perfect beauty.

I MADE no reply, but led her to the place where lady Woodville sat, who received her with the utmost ease and politeness. I swear to you my dear Seymour, that Emily never appeared half so lovely in my eyes, as at that moment. The innocence and gaiety of her heart, lighted up her charms ; and I flattered myself that the marchioness's brow seemed overcast with the pale hue of envy.

LADY Harriet and she renewed their acquaintance ; they all, soon after, joined your sister Sandford, and continued in the same party, for the remainder of the evening. I danced country dances with one of the miss Broughtons, and returned home, triumphing in the just preference which my heart accorded to lady Woodville, on the comparison I had drawn, in the ball room, between her and the marchioness.

FEAR for me no longer, my too timid friend ; but congratulate me on the most arduous of all victories, having conquered myself.

Your's, ever,

WOODVILLE.

L E T.

L E T T E R VI.

Lord SEYMOUR, to Lord WOODVILLE.

Hot-Wells, Bristol.

Dear WOODVILLE,

I Thank you for the attention you have shewn to those apprehensions, which you seem to think groundless. I did not expect to hear from you, during your stay at York. The constant hurry and dissipation of the scene, would have been a sufficient excuse for your silence, both to me and yourself, if you had not fancied you had not good news to communicate.

I KNOW you incapable of the smallest deceit, and am certain that you think your last a faithful transcript of your heart. But alas, my friend ! you impose upon yourself, if you imagine your passion for the marchioness extinct ; or that it is possible for you to give a preference, however justly deserved, to any other woman breathing. Therefore, for the truly amiable lady Woodville's sake I conjure you to avoid all future comparisons, as I think it will be highly injurious to her merits, to put her on a level with that object, which your partiality has made you look upon as the standard of perfection.

AFTER the confession of my own weakness, I condemn myself, for reasoning with you, upon this subject.—I know it is preaching to the winds.—Our passions make our fate ; and we ought to suffer, without repining, those calamities we bring upon ourselves : but what philosophy should enable us to bear the heart-rending agonies, of having involved the innocent in our punishment,
and

and rendered the amiable, and deserving unhappy ! Who can speak peace to my sad heart, when I reflect upon the miseries, in which I have plunged the ever-dear Charlotte Beaumont.

I KNOW this horrid image will shock your nature, and, for a time, you will shudder at yourself. But quickly say, these are the gloomy visions of Seymours disturbed brain. I would not make my Emily unhappy for the world—— then fly directly to the marchioness to banish the sad thought.——But I have done, for ever, on the theme ; for if this picture does not speak to your heart, I cannot paint more strongly.

MY wishes for your happiness but without hope, except in flight, shall still attend upon you ; and my highest esteem shall ever wait upon the lovely lady Woodville.

SEYMOUR.

L E T T E R VII.

Lord WOODVILLE, to Lord SEYMOUR.

My dear SEYMOUR,

I Confess your last letter shocked me extremely, but not from the motives you may possibly imagine. I am truly grieved to find your mind so overclouded, or ingrained, with the dark tints of melancholy, as not to allow your reason fair play. Answer me, were you not just then returned from the methodist's chapel, when you sat down to write ? When I expected congratulations, songs of triumph, and the laurel wreath, how could you cruelly pop an old fashioned prophecy

phesy upon me, of what never was, nor is, nor ever shall be!

BUT away with thy dismal presages, thou Pseudo-Magus! Have I not told thee, infidel as thou art, that no action of my life, should ever discover the real state of my heart to lady Woodville, or make her think it was not all her own? Have I not been married above eight months, and am I not, now, just as tender, and obliging, as the first day we were united?

HADST thou real pity, or compassion, thou wouldst advise me to desist from my pursuit of the marchioness, on her account, rather than lady Woodville's. O Seymour! what a triumph would it be, if I could humble this proud beauty, and pay her scorn for scorn! again reduce her to that soft trembling voice, with which she first uttered those dear sounds, *I love!*

RECAL her image to your view, on the first night we met her at the Bois de Boulogne.—What perfect beauty, amazing grace, and native modesty, beamed round her angel form!—There is a picture for you: and I hope much more to the life, than your Tisiphone.

I HAVE often thought of asking you, by what talisman or spell, your heart was preserved, from becoming her instant victim? you did not know your Charlotte then. Perhaps you felt the marchioness's power, and loved like me; but in pity to your friend, endeavoured to suppress your passion. I should adore you, if I thought it were so.

I DO not think her half so beautiful, as she was then, though her person is much more improved.—She can be gazed at, now, without a blush; and wears a rouge, I suppose, in order to heighten the finest complexion in the whole world.

WE

WE met this day on the race-ground. She has engaged me to hold a Pharo-bank for her, at night; and engaged me to prevail on lady Woodville to be of the party. — She seemed vastly charmed with her; but whenever she mentions her, assumes a peculiar air of sensibility. — I think I heard her sigh, when she pronounced the name.

WHAT an odd mortal was I, to sit down to write, when I have scarce time to breathe? Sir James Thornton's mare was distanced: he has lost above five hundred pounds; but what is much worse, I think he has lost himself. — I never saw such an alteration in any creature: I am almost sorry I brought him to Woodfort.

THE ladies fancy he is in love, but I cannot get the secret out of the simpleton. Lady Woodville and her nymphs are much yours. I intreat you will drink half a dozen bumpers of Burgundy before you sit down to write again, to

Your's sincerely,

WOODVILLE.

L E T T E R VIII.

Lord WOODVILLE, to Lord SEYMOUR.

AH, Seymour! what a tale have I to unfold to you! I am undone, for ever lost to virtue, relapsed again, to all my former follies — I doat, I die for love! Do not despise me, Seymour, but once again stretch forth thy friendly hand, and strive to save a sinking wretch. Alas,
it

it is in vain! fate overwhelms me, and I must yield to the impetuous torrent. But hear my story, first, before you pronounce stern sentence on me, and guilty as I am, perhaps you will pity me.

FOR some days past, the marchioness contrived to throw herself perpetually in my way, and strove to engage me in the most interesting conversations, by hinting at particular scenes, in which we had formerly been actors. Fool that I was, the recollection charmed me, and my weak heart expanded with delight, at the repetition of its former follies.

LAST night your sister, lady Sandford not being well, declined going to the ball. The marchioness sent to lady Woodville, to desire she might attend her to the rooms. Emily politely assented, and they went together—she returned and supped with us.

AFTER supper, she said she hated being cooped up in a carriage, at the course, and asked if I could lend her a horse, for the next day. The ladies informed her that no woman of fashion, ever appeared on horseback, at a race. She replied, she had no idea of a *salique* law, imposed by jockies; that she despised all vulgar prejudices, and would be the first to break through this arbitrary rule, if she could engage any lady to accompany her.

SHE soon prevailed on miss Weston, who rides remarkably well to be of her party, and again applied to me for a horse. I told her I had not one, that had been used to carry a lady, but if she would venture on that which I usually rode, it should be at her service.

SHE accepted my offer, and after dinner the next day, Fanny Weston, Ransford, and I, attended her at lady Sandford's; and sure there ne-

ver

ver was so lovely a figure as she made on horse-back !

“ *Diana huntress, mistress of the groves !*

“ *The charming Isabel, speaks, looks, and moves.*”

WHEN we came to the race-ground, all the company thronged round her, and though the horses were then running, she seemed to be the sole object of every one's attention. She affected to be displeased at the general gaze, and said if there was room in lady Woodville's carriage, she would get into it. We rode up immediately to it, but on perceiving that Emily was in the chariot, and lady Harriet with her, she would not suffer me to mention her design, lest it might be inconvenient to my wife, whose present condition is now very apparent.

THORNTON was by the side of the chariot, talking to the ladies who were in it. He immediately retired to make way for us to come close. A croud had followed us, and some one of their horses struck that on which the marchioness rode ; —it immediately made an effort to disengage itself from the throng, and in spite of all she could do, ran away with her, with such amazing swiftness, that it seemed to outgo all the racers.

I FOLLOWED instantly——O Seymour judge of my emotions, when I saw her fall to the ground ! when I came up to her, she was senseless, her eyes closed, and her face covered with blood and dust. I raised her in my arms, and held her to my breast ; but unable long to sustain her weight in that posture, I sunk down gently, held her on my knees, and gazed in stupid silence,

AT

AT that instant, numbers came up to us; among the rest, Thornton and lady Woodville, who on perceiving blood upon my cheek, fainted—She might have fallen to the earth, for me. I was insensible to all the world! Thornton luckily caught her in his arms, and conveyed her to her chariot.

NOTWITHSTANDING all the applications that were used, the marchioness seemed irrecoverable, and my despair is not to be expressed. A gentleman that was present, opened a vein in her arm. She then lifted up her languid eyes, and looking round her, closed them quick again, and whispered, as she lay upon my bosom, “I die my lord; but ought not to repine, since I expire within your arms.”

A CRIMSON blush succeeded to her paleness, and a vast shower of tears soon followed. I know not what reply I made, but I have reason to suppose it must have been expressive of the complicated passions which affected me. I carried her in my arms, to lady Winterton’s coach, and conveyed her in that manner to your sister’s.

We had all the assistance this place could afford. My spirits are so extremely harrassed, that I cannot write more, than just to give you the satisfaction to know that she is not in danger—would I could say as much.

Adieu, till next post,

WOODVILLE.

L E T.

LETTER IX.

Lord WOODVILLE, to Lord SEYMOUR.

AS soon as the fair invalid was laid on the bed, and the medical tribe who were summoned from all quarters had performed their usual evolutions, of pulse-feeling, profound looks, and long prescriptions, I knelt by her bed-side, and tenderly inquired her health? She told me, that though much hurt, she did believe, the only incurable wound she had received, was given by herself, in the weak confession she had made, when she thought her situation had placed her beyond the necessity of longer disguising the tender sentiments, she felt for me. She would give words, to recal what she had said; but, as she knew that was impossible, begged I would not despise her, or meanly think her capable of a design, to rival lady Woodville; and that the moment she was sufficiently recovered, she should fly me, and England for ever;

THINK of my situation, Seymour! and forgive my weakness, while I tell you I poured forth all the fondness long concealed, even from myself, within my labouring bosom, and swore, with too much truth, I never had, one moment ceased to love her. She sighed and wept; I kissed her lilly hand, and bathed it with her tears.

How much longer we should have continued in this situation, I know not, had I not been roused by a message from lady Woodville, to inquire the marchioness's health, and an excuse for not making the inquiry in person, on account of her

her own indisposition. I started, Seymour—and recollected that I had a wife.

I FLEW home instantly; found Emily had been blooded, and put to bed.—I rejoiced at being able to avoid the sight of that amiable woman; said I would not disturb her, by going into her chamber, and ordered another bed to be got ready for me, against night.

CONSCIOUS guilt will make a coward of the bravest man. I could not bear my own thoughts.—I dreaded being alone. I went to the coffee-house, to drown reflection in noise and nonsense. The conversation turned intirely on the accident that had befallen the marchioness, and I replied with the utmost complacency, to every trifling question that was asked, because it related to her.

I SOON grew weary of this scene. I walked out, and found my steps insensibly straying towards the marchioness.—By chance I met Thornton, who with more liveliness in his looks than I have seen for a long time, told me lady Woodville was much better, and would be glad to see me; that she had expressed some uneasiness, at their not suffering me to go into her chamber, when I called at home, though she was then asleep.

I WENT directly back with him, and saw my Emily; she looked pale, and dispirited, questioned me with great tenderness about the marchioness, and said the fright she had suffered, on her account, joined to her apprehension of my having received some hurt, had quite overpowered her; but she would endeavour to become a stouter soldier. Sweet gentleness! how thy soft looks upbraid me!

I DETERMINED not to go to the marchioness, that night, but sent to know how she did, and sat down

down to write my last letter to you. In that, and this, are contained only the transactions of one fatal day.—Where my narrative will end, I know not! but the only relief that is, at present left me, is the pouring out my heart to you.—I again implore you to pity its weakness, and pardon its follies.

Your's ever,
WOODVILLE.

L E T T E R X.

Lord WOODVILLE, to Lord SEYMOUR.

TOO cruel Seymour! how am I to interpret such an obstinate silence? am I so far sunk in your esteem, that you disdain even to hold converse, or correspondence with me? Now was the time, to have exerted all your friendship, and stopped me on the very verge of ruin.—But you disclaim the painful office of counselling an incorrigible, self-willed man; and I now triumph in your cold neglect. Left to myself in such a critical juncture, I have a higher pride, in being able, from my own conduct, to claim your friendship and esteem, than I could have felt, had I acted conformably to your prudent advice, and declined the meeting of my most dangerous foe.

THE morning after the date of my last, I was surprized to find lady Woodville in the dining-room, dressed, and waiting breakfast for me, when I came down stairs, between seven and eight o'clock.—I thought she looked paler, and more delicate, than I had ever seen her, with an air of resignation impressed upon her countenance, which, added to its natural, sweetness, had rendered her one of the most interesting objects, I had ever beheld, The tenderness with
which

which I enquired her health, seemed to animate her languid frame, and her eyes quickly recovered their native lustre.

AFTER breakfast, she proposed accompanying me to see the marchioness, I was embarrassed beyond measure ; but knew not how to prevent her doing, what appeared to be so proper. Just then, Thornton luckily came into the room, which afforded me a moment to recollect myself. I told her I thought it would be better to send first, to inquire how the marchioness had rested, and whether she was yet able to receive our visits ? Emily seemed to blush at her want of consideration, and readily assented to my proposal.

WILLIAMS was dispatched with a card, and soon returned with a verbal answer, that the marchioness was much better, and would be glad to see us. I hoped she would have had address enough, to have saved me from the embarrassment, which such an interview must give me. But there was now no retreating ; and Emily and I got into the chariot together.

WHEN we were shewn into the marchioness's apartment, she was lying on a couch, in the most elegant dishabille.—What a subject for an Apelles, Seymour ! It was with difficulty I could restrain myself from expressing the transports that I felt. She rose to receive lady Woodville, with such an air of graceful dignity, as queens might gladly learn. I saw that Emily blushed, and looked confused, at her amazing superiority, but was relieved by the entrance of your sister, lady Sandford.

THE marchioness's behaviour towards me, was remarkably cold, and distant ; and I thought she overacted her part so much, that any other woman in the world, but Emily must have perceived something extraordinary, in the change

of her manner ; but happily lady Woodville is a stranger to suspicion.

You may suppose our visit was not a very long one, yet it appeared to me insufferably tedious ; and I thought myself more obliged to Emily, when she rose to go away, than ever I had been to any one in my life. I had the happiness to hear that the marchioness had received no hurt from her fall, that could be of any ill consequence ; the blood that appeared, was from a slight contusion in her nose.

RANSFORD came to wait on her, while we were there ; and as he handed my wife to her carriage, and I was quitting the room, the marchioness, with the utmost *fiercé*, though in a low voice, said, lord Woodville, return instantly, or never !

THE manner with which she pronounced these words, astonished and confounded me. I then saw that her behaviour towards me was the effect of resentment, not art ;—yet how had I offended, how forfeited that tenderness which she expressed for me the day before ? Inexplicable creature ! mysterious woman ! of all riddles, the hardest to be expounded by the boasted wisdom of thy vassal man !

I BOWED, and withdrew in the utmost amazement at her conduct ; and by vainly endeavouring to account for it, I fell into such a profound reverie, that I did not even perceive the motion of the carriage till it stopped at our lodgings.

IRHEN felt myself ashamed at not having taken the least notice of Emily during our little journey ; and by way of saying something, told her I had been considering whether we might not set out for London the next day, if it was agreeable to her. She, smiling, said my will was hers ;

hers ; and though quite unprepared for such an expedition, as she did not know I purposed going so soon, she would be ready at what hour I pleased.

I KNEW not what I said, when I talked of London, and had not the least intention of carrying her there ; but my blunder was lucky, as it gave me an opportunity of paying a well deserved compliment to her complacency, and condescension, and also of paving the way to my going without her, if the sovereign arbitress of my fate, should command me to attend her. I likewise appeared to have the merit of sacrificing my own inclination to hers, by readily consenting to her returning to Woodfort.

UPON these terms we parted, and I set out, with a slow pace, and a disturbed mind, to measure back the ground I had just passed. During my walk, I reflected upon the disagreeable necessity I had laid myself under, of acting the hypocrite, with a woman whose amiable qualities compelled me to esteem her, and whose personal charms fully intitled her to the fondest affection of an unengaged heart. Deceit cannot dwell long with honour ; and I determined either to sacrifice my passion to my virtue, or at once to triumph over character, honour, and every other consideration in life, and act the villain boldly.

ALMOST distracted with the struggles of my mind, I entered the marchioness's apartment. I found her lying on a couch, with a handkerchief close to her eyes, which she removed, upon my entrance, and showed her lovely face, all bathed in tears. I advanced with precipitation, and would have kissed her hand, but she withdrew it from me, with such an air of coldness and disdain, as almost petrified me : then rising briskly, said is your wife with you ?

I GRAVELY answerd, no. She then burst into a violent passion of tears, and exclaimed, Ah, Woodville ! after what had passed between us, but a few short hours ago, how could you use me thus ! How did you dare to insult me with the presence of that object, whose *legal* claim to your affection, renders mine criminal ?

I WAS so much alarmed and confounded, at the vehemence of her voice, and manner, that I knew not what answer to make, but told her it was lady Woodville who had proposed our coming together, and that I knew not how to avoid attending her, without running the hazard of giving her offence.

WHAT, then you fear as well as love her, and you avow it to my face !——I would not willingly, madam, inflict unnecessary wounds, upon the victim I have sacrificed to you, nor add brutality to perfidy.——Her colour rose to crimson.

So then, my lord, you vainly hope to keep a flame alive in two such hearts as mine and lady Woodville's ! to love *en Turk*, and play our passions off, against each other, for your sport !——Amazing vanity ! But know it will not do, my lord ; her soft, insipid nature might perhaps submit to be the loved sultana of the day, then yield her place to me, or any other, and meanly take it back again, from your caprice ; but I will reign alone, or else despise that transitory toy, the empire of your heart.

You may remember, madam, there was a time, when more than you now ask, or I can give, my hand and heart were offered at your feet ; you then disdained to accept them ; they are no longer free. For doating on you, as I do, with all the fervor of distracted passion, I cannot be insensible to the merits of unoffending
innocence,

innocence, and love ; nor cease one hour, to feel the anguish of remorse, for having injured lady Woodville.

If the frankness of this confession, madam, should exclude me for ever from your love, I have the consolation to know that it must insure me your esteem.—Without some claim to the latter, I should be unworthy of the former. But if under these unhappy circumstances, you still can condescend to feel that passion, which you have profest, let me upon my knees, conjure you to tell me how I may preserve my honour, without forfeiting what is as dear to me, your love.

I HAD knelt at her feet, during the latter part of this discourse.—Her eyes had streamed.—I do not blush to own that mine were not quite dry. She remained silent for some minutes, and when I pressed her to speak, she replied with a determined voice and manner : There is no alternative, my lord ; you must fly with me, or never see me more.

I HAD dreaded such a proposal, yet could scarce believe she would make it, and with the utmost agitation cried out, Impossible ! But before I could utter another syllable she laid her hand upon my lips, and said, I command you silence.—You must not, shall not answer me. I know you are to quit this place immediately : would I had never seen it. But as you are now to determine the fate of one whose love for you has made her leap the bounds prescribed to her weak sex, O do not reply rashly ! but take the last moment that can be allowed, before you pronounce the doom of a fond wretch, who has placed more than her life—her happiness or misery—in your power.

ROSE and bowed, totally unable to speak

or even to think, from the confusion of my ideas. She took advantage of my silence to tell me she would not receive any letter upon this subject, from me, but that she expected to see me at twelve o'clock next day; and smiling added, lest you should forget, I will present you with a little monitor, which will remind you of your absent friend.

SHE then gave me her picture, which I had a thousand times in our first acquaintance solicited in vain. I kissed it with transport. See here, said she, and drew a miniature of me, which I had formerly given her, out of her pocket; and now take care that you preserve my image, as carefully as I have done yours.

THEN looking at her watch, you must leave me; it is near lady Sandford's dining hour, and I must dress. How slowly will the miserable moments creep, till we two meet again! But I shall defy time, after that, as it can neither add to, or diminish from the felicity or anguish, which must then irrevocably be my portion.

I INTREATED her to spare me on that subject, as she would not permit me to reply. You must withdraw, then, immediately, my lord, for I can neither think, or speak, on any other theme. She permitted me to kiss her hand before I left her; and seemed to have conquered all those violent passions, which possessed her at my approach. I confess I quitted her, with infinite reluctance, and so I now must you.

WOODVILLE.

L E T.

L E T T E R XI.

Lord WOODVILLE, to Lord SEYMOUR.

I PARTED from the marchioness in a more irresolute and confused state of mind, than I had ever before experienced. I well knew that all the colour of my future fate, depended on the resolution I was compelled to make within a few short hours. I found it absolutely impossible to determine on any thing, from a consciousness of the importance of my final determination.

NEVER, sure, had reason and passion a severer strife. One moment, I resolved to sacrifice every thing to love; to fly with my adored Isabella, into some distant country, "and live in shades "with her, and love alone." The next instant, the image of the gentle Emily obtruded itself upon my imagination, in her present situation; pale, and dying. Methought I heard her last soft sigh express my name; I felt myself a murderer, and started at my shadow.

IN this distracted state, I had wandered a considerable way in the field, and saw night coming on apace, without power or inclination to think of returning to York, when I heard the sound of a horse galloping towards me.—The man who rode him called to me, to direct him the nearest way to the town, and also if I could inform him where lord Woodville lived.

THE sound of my own name surprized me, and I inquired his business.—The fellow quickly knew me; he instantly alighted, and told me he was a servant of Sir Harry Ransford's, and had been sent express, to let his young master know that lady Ransford had eloped, two days before, with captain Barnard; and that it was

supposed they were gone either to France or Ireland. He added that the poor old knight was almost distracted for the loss of his lady, and wanted his son to pursue the ravisher.

THE servant pressed me to mount his horse, and expressed his simple astonishment at my being by myself in such a lonesome place at that hour. I refused his offer, and we walked on together. It was near eight o'clock when I got home; and as it was the last night of the races, I did suppose Emily was gone to the ball—but I found her alone.

I THOUGHT she looked as if she had been in tears, though her eyes sparkled when she saw me. This little circumstance had its full weight; and the unaffected joy she shewed at my return, without seeming to be alarmed at my absence, when contrasted with the violence of temper, which the marchioness had discovered in the morning, so far turned the scale, as to determine me to remain a slave to the obligations I owe to my wife, and the world: and though I am persuaded that I shall never be able to extract the arrow from my wounded heart, I will suffer it to rankle there in silence, and endeavour to derive fortitude sufficient to bear the anguish, from the noble consideration of having sacrificed my pleasure—I must not stile it happiness—to my duty—What would my friend have more?

MY mind grew much calmer, after these reflections.—In order to prevent my relapsing, I locked up the marchioness's picture in my writing box, and threw the key into the fire, that it might not be in my power to gaze away my reason, for that night at least.

EMILY was much surprized, at the account of lady Ransford, and captain Barnard—her own innocence keeps her a child.—She begged
I would

I would not mention the story before lady Harriet.—I knew there had been an attachment between the captain and her, but thought it long since over—yet why should I imagine that time could conquer love? O! never, never, Seymour!

LADY Woodville and I supped, *tête à tête*; the young folks, as she calls them, though they are all older than herself, staid late at the ball.—I was impatient for Ransford's return, and had sent to the assembly room, to look for him, but he was not there.—I ordered every thing to be in readiness for his setting out immediately on his filial errand.

WHEN the ladies and Thornton came in, I retired to my chamber to wait for Ransford. By frequently revolving my unhappy situation in my mind, I began to consider it in a new light; which at once encreased my misery, and confirmed me in the justness of the resolution, I had before taken, of bearing it in silence. Upon strict examination, I found I was the only culpable person of the three; and therefore ought to be the only sufferer——

WRETCH that I was, I had deceived myself; and in consequence of that error, I had imposed upon another! How vain to imagine that the marchioness's cruel treatment of my love, her preferring age, and infirmity to me, on account of superior rank and riches, had supplied me with arms sufficient to vindicate my freedom, and break her tyrannic chains. O Seymour! they are twined about my heart, and nought, I fear, but death can loose them!

It was near three o'clock, when Ransford came in; he seemed in very high spirits—when I told him of lady Ransford's ill conduct, he said he was not in the least surprized; he had

long known that his stepdame only waited for a gallant, who had spirit enough to engage in such a frolic with her; and he thought his father had a fair riddance.

I WAS surprized to hear him treat the affair so lightly, as I know him to be a man of nice honour. I then asked him, whether he intended going immediately to his father? he answered no; said he was engaged in a pursuit of the utmost consequence, which he could not quit, and that he did not believe he should see Ransford-Hall for some time.

I TOLD him I thought his father would have reason to resent his neglect, and pressed him to wait upon him, though but for one day. He persisted in his resolution, and we parted. I think it odd, that Ransford did not communicate his motives for acting in this manner, to me;—but what have I to do with other people's affairs? my poor tortured mind is sufficiently incumbered with its own.

I THINK I need not tell you that I passed a sleepless night.—At breakfast, I told Emily that I should be ready to set out with her for Woodfort, after dinner if she pleased. She seemed delighted, and the carriage was ordered, at half an hour after four.—I intreated Sir James Thornton to return with us, for a few days; he made a thousand excuses; but at length complied, at lady Woodville's request.

I WAS now to enter upon the most arduous task of my whole life; that of taking an everlasting leave of the woman whome I doated on—and in this highest act of self-denial, I must appear to her, a volunteer! I am grieved that Brutus should have said “virtue was but a name.” O let me bend before her awful shrine,
and

and pay my grateful vows, for the kind aid she lent me, in that hour of trial !

I ENDEAVOURED to assume an air of calmness on my entering the marchioness's apartment. She fixed her eyes, her piercing eyes, in steadfast gaze upon me, as if to read my soul. A minute passed in silence. I found she would not speak, and hardly seemed to breathe. You see before you madam, an unhappy man, who dares not purchase transport with remorse ; and therefore, turns self-banished from her sight, whom most his soul adores !

SHE quick exclaimed, is it possible ! and am I then despised, neglected—for a wife ! Cold, and unloving Woodville ! Why did you ever feign a passion for me ? Why strive to make me think it still subsisted in your frozen heart ? You cannot bear remorse ! Ungrateful man ! should not I have shared it with you ? Is then my fame less dear than yours ? and did I hesitate one moment to sacrifice that, and myself both, to you ? Obscurity and infamy were not bars to me, whilst you, infirm of mind, desert the woman you pretend to love, for fear your wife should cry.

TRUE, madam, I replied, I would not give her cause to weep, for worlds—nay what is more, for you ! You have acknowledged too, that the step your kindness prompted you to take, must be attended with severe regret also, on your own part. What should I feel then, from rendering you unhappy ! I have not fortitude to brave such two fold agony.

O ! you have half that guilt to answer for already.—But my pride revolt at my own meanness. Leave me, Sir—leave me for ever, Woodville ! I shall obey you, madam, but before we part, *for ever*, suffer me, at least, to satisfy your pride, by declaring that no man ever loved,
with

with fonder passion than I now feel for you—how far time and absence may be able to conquer it, I know not ; but should they fail of their usual effects, it is impossible that I should bear it long ; and now, my Isabella one last embrace——may angels guard you !

I RUSHED out of the house, like a distracted man, but had not walked a quarter of a mile, before the recititude of my conduct towards this too lovely woman, began by flattering my pride, to qualify my passion ; and I returned home, in a more rational state of mind than I have known for some time.

REJOICE with me, my friend ; the conflict's past ! and be just enough to acknowledge my triumph more compleat, than the much boasted one of Scipio. He only resigned an *alienated heart*—while I forego a *self devoted victim* !

I AM, this moment, going to step into the coach for Woodfort, where I shall impatiently long to see you. But, O write soon, to strengthen, and applaud my growing virtue.

Your's

WOODVILLE.

L E T T E R XII.

Lord SEYMOUR, to Lord WOODVILLE.

Hot-Wells.

BELIEVE me, Woodville, there is not another event within the power of fortune, which could now give me half the joy that I received from your last letter. I do congratulate my noble friend, myself, and all the world, on that heroic virtue, which has enabled you to pass the

the *ordeal fire*, unscathed and unhurt. Rather let me say, that like the *Amianthus**, you have gained new whiteness, from the flames, and shine with brighter lustre, than even unblemished innocence can boast.

I FIND my stile, perhaps, too much elevated, by my sentiments, but sudden transitions must have strong effects. I had scarce a hope of your escaping the snare that was laid for you, and mourned your fall from honour, with infinitely more regret, than I should have done your death. Had the latter happened, my grief would have been selfish; but in the other case, I felt for those pangs which you must have inevitably suffered; and for the miseries, which your crimes must have inflicted, upon your amiable, and innocent wife.

BUT I do not wish again to recal this gloomy prospect to your view; you may now, and ought to look forward, to a long train of happiness; for surely, if such a thing is to be found on earth, it must arise from a consciousness, of having acted rightly. Who then can be better intitled to it than yourself?

As I have found some little benefit from these waters, I propose staying here, some time longer—I shall then have some affairs of consequence to my fortune, which I have too long neglected, to settle in London. So that I cannot hope to see you, at Woodfort, in less than two months.

I INTREAT to hear from you, often, but must insist upon your not mentioning the subject of our late correspondence; forget it, Woodville, and be happy.

Your's, ever,

SEYMOUR.

* The *Asbestos* or, *Salamander's wool*.

Note,

Note, The journal, promised by lady Woodville to lady Straffon, is purposely omitted, as it contains nothing more, than an account of some of those particulars, that have been already mentioned, which, happened during the week they staid at York races.

The Editor.

L E T T E R XIII.

Lady STRAFFON, to Lady WOODVILLE.

I FLATTER myself that this letter will reach Woodfort soon after your arrival there, and that it will find my dear Emily rejoicing in the calm delights of domestic happiness, after the scene of hurry and dissipation she has so lately gone through.

I GIVE you credit for the lovely picture you have drawn of the marchioness, and also for the tender concern you express for the accident that befel her—but I am sorry your nerves were so weak as to occasion your fainting.

I ALLOW much for your present situation, but do not let that, or any thing else, my dear sister, suffer you to indulge, in an habitual lowness of spirits. There is an air of languid discontent, runs through the latter part of the little journal, you were so good to send me, that alarms me much—yet I am certain you endeavoured to conceal your sentiments, even from me; and I approve your caution, as I am persuaded, that by speaking, or writing on any subject that affects us, we strengthen our own feelings of it; and half the simple girls, who are now pining for love by murmuring rivulets, or
in

in shady groves would forget the dear objects of their passion, if they had not a female confidante as silly as themselves, to whom they daily recount the fancied charms of their Adonis, and utter vows of everlasting constancy.

BUT do not now my dear Emily, so perversely misunderstand me, as to suppose that I would wish you to conceal any thing that distresses you from me, or that I should desire you to let sorrow prey in silence on *your heart*, merely to save *mine* the pain of suffering with you. No, I conjure you to speak freely to me, and if I cannot cure, I will at least sooth your anxiety, if real, and endeavour to laugh you out of it, if imaginary.

WE have had a very agreeable visitor for these ten days past at Straffon-Hill——lord Mount Willis—He lived abroad, chiefly in Italy these ten years : yet is not infected with foreign fopperies, and can relish both the food and manners of his native country. Sir John met him last, at Paris, from whence he is but just returned.

HE tells us that Sir James Miller, and his *cara sposa*, are universally ridiculous. Her ladyship affects all the lively gallantry, d'une dame Francoise, but is unfortunately incumbered with all the clumsy awkwardness of a vulgar Englishwoman. Sir James plays deep, and has lost considerably. Lucy seems hurt at the latter part of this account. The goodness of her heart is inexhaustible.

THE approach of a certain desirable event, with that of winter, will, I hope, soon afford me the pleasure of embracing my dear Emily and her lord. We shall return to London in ten or twelve days. Have you made any discovery, in the *terra incognita* of Sir James Thornton's heart ? Does Fanny Weston sigh in concert
with

with the Æolian lyre ? or have the equinoctial blasts so chilled her flame, that she prefers a warm room and chearful company, to lonely meditation and soft sounds ?

How does lady Harriet bear this second instance of captain Barnard's perfidy ? and how does the poor old gouty knight support the vulgarly called *loss* of his detestible wife ? I find myself in a very impertinent mood ; and that I may not ask more questions in one letter than you may be inclined to answer in two, I shall for the present bid you adieu.

F. STRAFFON.

L E T T E R XIV.

Lady WOODVILLE, to Lady STRAFFON.

YES, my dear Fanny, I am now, thank heaven, safely arrived at Woodfort--would I had never left it ! I think even the place, and every thing in it, is altered, during a short absence of twelve days. The trees have lost their verdure, and the birds cease to sing. But though the autumnal season may have produced these effects, I begin to fear there is a greater change in me than in any of the objects that surround me.

YET am I in the spring of life, not ripened even to summer ; while like a blasted flower I shrink and fade. Say, Fanny, why is this ? The animal and vegetable world bloom in their proper season, youth——while amongst those whom we call rational, grief steals the roses from the downy cheek, and flowing tears oft dim the brilliant eye. Lord Seymour is unhappy ;
Thornton

Thornton sighs ; and my loved lord, seems wretched,—need I go on and close the climax, with my breaking heart.

CHIDE me, or chide me not, the secret's out ; I am undone, my sister ! in vain lord Woodville strives beneath the masque of tenderness, to act a part, which he no longer feels ; the piercing eyes of love detect his coldness—his kind attention is all lost on me, his stifled sighs belie his face and tongue, and whisper what he suffers when he smiles.

O, FANNY ! tell me how I have offended him ! how lost that heart, which formed my utmost bliss ! let me blot out that passage, with my tears ; it cannot it must not be.—I will not live, if I have lost his love. Why are you not here, to flatter me—to tell me that my fears are groundless, and that he sighs from habit, or from chance ?

AH ; no ! since he whom I adore has failed to blind me, I cannot, if I would be now deceived. Yet if I have erred, why does he not speak out and tell me I have done wrong ? Believe me, Fanny I have tried my heart, examined every hidden thought that's there, and cannot find out one that should offend him.

ARE all men thus inconstant ? I was too young to mark Sir John's behaviour, when you were married first. A sudden ray of hope, now dawns upon me ; perhaps the great exertion of my lord's spirits, while he remained at York, may have occasioned a proportionate degree of languor—perhaps he may again recover his natural cheerfulness, and your poor Emily may again be happy——perhaps—I will strive to hope the best.

I HAVE no thoughts of going to London—I always purposed lying in at Woodfort—I had
flattered

flattered myself, you would be with me, at that hour of trial ; but I do not now expect it—— I know Sir John would not consent to your running the hazard of travelling, in your present situation, as it has formerly been of ill consequence to you, I therefore release my dear Fanny, and desire she may not suffer the least anxiety on my account.

I FIND myself much more at ease, than when I began this letter, and I must affirm, though in contradiction to your opinion, that pouring forth our distresses, in the bosom of a friend, affords, at least, a temporary relief to the afflicted. I am not able to write more at present, but will answer all your queries by next post——

'Till then,
adieu,

E. WOODVILLE.

L E T T E R XV.

Lady WOODVILLE, to Lady STRAFFON.

My dear FANNY,

THERE never sure was such a man as lord Woodville——he is not only determined to preserve my affection, but to rob me of the poor consolation, of complaining that I no longer possess his. In spite of all the pains I have taken to conceal the anguish of my heart, he has certainly perceived it, and by the most tender and interesting conversation, had well nigh led me into a confession, of my being unhappy.

THANK heaven, I stopped just short of that——had I avowed it, he doubtless would have asked the cause, and artfully have drawn me in,
at

at least, tacitly to reproach his conduct. O never I never, Fanny, can I be capable of that indiscretion.

BUT were I weak, or mean enough, to do it, I have now no reason for complaint—his tenderness, politeness, and attention, are unabated. No other person, but myself could possibly perceive the smallest alteration in his conduct; and I begin to hope, that my apprehensions have had no other foundation, than an extremity of delicacy, bordering upon weakness in myself. A thousand, nay ten thousand women, might, and would be happy, with such an amiable and tender husband, nor has your Emily a wish ungratified, but that of seeing her dear lord quite happy.

I AM sorry to tell you that Sir James Thornton leaves us to-morrow; he is to set out immediately on the grand tour. My Lord has in vain endeavoured to find out the source of his melancholy; we can discover nothing but that he is unhappy, which I am sincerely sorry for, as he really is the most agreeable accomplished young man, I ever was acquainted with.

LADY Harriet affects to appear thankful for her escape from captain Bernard; but finds his elopement a cause for sorrow, on his lady's account. Sir Harry is so much enraged, at his son's neglect of him, that he begins to be reconciled to his wife's conduct, and speaks of him, with more acrimony than of her. Indeed, I think Mr. Ransford highly to blame, for refusing to attend his father upon such an occasion.

FANNY Weston is *a la mort*, at Sir James Thornton's quitting us. That love is the cause of her mourning, I well know, but I begin now to apprehend that Sir James, and not lord Seymour, is the object of her passion. She has a
much

much better chance in this case, than the other, for I am persuaded if Thornton knew of her affection for him he would endeavour to make her happy.

ALAS ! if he loves another, how impossible ! I fancy he is enamoured of one of the mills Withers's.—His fortune and family are such, that I do not believe he would be rejected ; yet I could not wish him success for poor Fanny Weston's sake.

MEN more easily triumph over an unhappy passion, than women. Dissipation, change of place, and objects, all contribute to their cure ; while perhaps the poor sighing fair one is absolutely confined to the same spot, where she first beheld her charmer, and where every object reminds her, that here he sat, walked, or talked.

I AM persuaded there is a great deal more in these local memento's than lovers are willing to allow. I therefore shall not oppose Fanny Weston's going to London, if she should again propose it.

SIR William and lady Lawson are to dine with us this day.—I will try to muster all my spirits to receive her. I would not, for the world, make her unhappy, by giving her the least room to suspect that I am so.

ADIEU, my dearest Fanny ; to you, and you only, I can, without blushing, discover all the weakness of a heart, that truly, and sincerely loves you.

E. WOODVILLE.

P. S. I have this moment, received a message from my lord, to let me know that he shall spend three or four days, in hunting, with Sir William Atkinson. I am glad of any thing that can amuse him.

LET-

L E T T E R XVI.

Lady STRAFFON, to Lady WOODVILLE.

I CANNOT express how much my dear Emily's last letters have affected and distressed me.—Your being unhappy is certainly sufficient to render me so; and what adds to my concern, is, my being absolutely incapable of affording you the least consolation, as I am utterly ignorant of the real cause of your affliction. I sometimes think, that it is only a phantom, conjured up by your too delicate apprehensions; and is, of course, merely imaginary.—At other times, the natural constancy of men alarms me with an idea of lord Woodville's having met, at York, or elsewhere, some object, that may, for a time, divide his heart with you.

OBSERVE, my dearest Emily, that this is mere conjecture;—but we must take certain positions for granted before we can reason upon any thing. Now do not start, when I tell you, I had much rather your uneasiness should arise from the latter source, than the former;—though I should consider, even a transitory alienation of his affection, as a misfortune.

LET us now suppose this to be the case, and then see how far you have reason to be distressed by such an incident. The passions of the human mind, are, I fear, as little under our command, as the motions of our pulse:—you have therefore just as much reason to resent your husband's becoming enamoured of another person, as you would have to be offended at his having a fever.

BUT if, in consequence of that delirium, he should sacrifice your peace to the gratification of his

his passions, by an open and avowed pursuit of the beloved object; or otherwise render you unhappy, by unkindness, or neglect, you might then have some cause to complain; but if he be unfortunate enough to feel an unwarrantable passion, and keeps that feeling all his own, his merit rises above humanity, and he ought to become almost an object of adoration to you.

HAS he not fled from this alluring charmer? Has he not hid his passion from the world, nor wounded even your pride? Is not his tenderness and kind attention still unremitted towards you? Indeed, my Emily, allowing these to be matters of fact, you owe him more than you can ever pay. Consider what his regard to you must be, that can prevail on him to sacrifice his passion, to your peace?

THEN do not, I implore you, my dear child, by even the least appearance of distress, aggravate his, but be assured, that from a heart, where honour is the ruling principle, you have every thing to hope, and that the transitory gloom which now affects him, will be succeeded by the brightest triumph; and that his reason and his virtue will both join in securing his affection to you, upon a more solid, and permanent foundation, than it could ever have been, if this accident had not happened.

I HAVE gladly laid hold on what you will think the greatest evil, lord Woodville's having conceived an involuntary passion. But formidable as they may appear to you, believe me, Emily it is of little consequence, compared to both what he and you must suffer, should there be found no real cause for your distress. A mind so unhappily turned, as yours would then appear to be, must be incapable of receiving or administering

nistering content. I am shocked at the horrid idea, and will not dwell upon it longer.

As I kept your letters in a particular drawer of my desk, in looking for your last but one, chance presented me with your first letter from Woodfort, where you set out a strenuous advocate for the existence of terrestrial felicity. Fallacious as the opinion may be, I am truly sorry you have had any reason to alter your sentiments; but let it, at least, console you, that if you are not an example of your own argument, there is no such thing as an exception to the general rule, that happiness is not, nor ever will be, the lot of human nature, till perfection becomes inherent to it.

THE subjects of this letter, have sunk my spirits so much, that I fear I shall rather increase, than lessen your depression, if I pursue them farther. I will, therefore, change to one that ought to give me pleasure, and will, I hope, afford you some.

LORD Mount Willis, thoroughly apprized of our dear Lucy's former attachment to Sir James Miller, has declared a passion for her, in the most polite and elegant terms, that can be imagined. Sensibility, he says, is, with him, the highest mark of virtue; and a heart, that could feel what hers has suffered, for an unworthy object, must be capable of the highest tenderness for one who can, at least, boast the merit of being sensible of her charms.

A LITTLE false delicacy has, as yet, prevented Lucy from declaring her sentiments, in favour of this charming man, for such, indeed, he is; though I can see she likes him full as well, and must necessarily approve him much more, than she ever did Sir James Miller.

BUT

BUT Lucy declared she would never marry, and that she would leave her fortune to my Emily.—I know this dwells on her mind, though it never did on mine; for I have as little faith, in the vows of disappointed love, as in the promises of successful ones. However, I both hope, and believe, that lord Mount Willis will triumph over her scruples, and that I shall have the pleasure of seeing her the happy wife, of that very amiable man.

I AM sorry you are to lose Sir James Thornton; but perhaps the want of his company, may induce lord Woodville to come to London; and I should rejoice at any cause that could produce that effect, for I cannot bear the thought of your lying-in in the country.

FANNY Weston is not of a temper to break her heart for love; but I would, by all means, have her come to town. Her aunt, lady Weston, talks of going to Bath, next month, and if Fanny chuses to accompany her, I will answer for it, that that gay scene of dissipation will soon conquer an hopeless passion, whether lord Seymour, or Sir James Thornton be the object.

WE arrived in Hill-street last Thursday; to-morrow, Sir John is to place my little Edward, at Eton. The simple mamma will feel the loss of her dear play-fellow, but the prudent mother will bless the memory of Henry the Sixth, who instituted that noble foundation.

THE accounts we have received of Sir James Miller, are shocking.—He has been obliged to quit Paris, on account of his debts, and is retired into some of the provinces.—His lady remains in the capital, living away upon credit, without character, I begin to pity the unhappy man.

You

You will easily perceive that this letter has been written at different periods. The world breaks in upon me. I am embarked in the stream, and must be hurried away by the current, with sticks straws, and a thousand other insignificant things.

ADIEU my dear Emily: I hope, soon, very soon, to see you—for, if *the mountains will not come to Mabomet*, &c.

F. STRAFFON.

L E T T E R XVII.

Lady WOODVILLE, to Lady STRAFFON.

I AM sincerely sorry for having given pain to my dear Fanny's gentle heart, as I cannot say that her participation has alleviated my distresses. For giving the fullest scope to the arguments you have advanced, what do they prove, but that your Emily is unhappy; and that she knew too well before! You set lord Woodville's merits in the fairest light, cruel Fanny! Why could you not find out some fault in him, to make me love him less? But it is impossible; he is, without dispute, the most amiable of mankind.

I TOLD you, in my last, that Sir James Thornton was to leave Woodfort the day following, which was Tuesday. On Monday night he took a very polite leave of us all, and I thought appeared more chearful than he had been for some time past. When we were at breakfast on Tuesday, we were told Sir James had set out at six o'clock; and immediately after my lords servant presented him with a letter—he appeared to shew some emotion while he read it,

and soon withdrew to his closet. In less than half an hour, I received the following billet, with the aforesaid letter, inclosed.

To Lady WOODVILLE.

“ I SHOULD be unjust to my unhappy friend, should I conceal the noble and generous sentiments he expresses for the most lovely and deserving of her sex; and I should still more highly injure the unbounded confidence of my dear Emily, should I prevent her receiving the tribute due to that merit, which could inspire so truly delicate and sincere a passion. I feel I know not what kind of a mixed sensation, for poor Thornton; I both admire and pity him.

“ I would have delivered the inclosed with my own hand; but feared my presence might distress my Emily, or, perhaps restrain the pity-flowing tear, which, I confess, I think his sufferings merit.

Adieu, my dearest Emily.

WOODVILLE.

Sir JA. THORNTON, to Lord WOODVILLE.

“ Indebted as I am for many obligations to your lordship, and sensibly awake to the warmest sensations of gratitude, I could not think of quitting Woodfort, and England, for ever, without gratifying that friendly curiosity, which has so often sought the cause of the too visible change in my manners and appearance. You will perhaps be startled when I tell you, that this alteration is owing to yourself.

“ Ignorant of every refinement, and elegance of life, dissipated in my temper, and unattached to any particular object, by your lordship's friendly

friendly invitation, I arrived at Woodfort.—Heavens ! what a scene opened to my astonished sense ! The sudden effect of colours, to a person just restored to sight, could not be felt more strongly. Every object I beheld, was new, was amiable ! yet in this charming groupe, my lord, there were degrees of merit, and my then vacant heart dared to aspire at the most perfect of her sex. Need I now tell you, that lady Woodville was its choice ! Yes, I avow it ! Passion is involuntary ; nor would I, if I could, be cured of mine.

“ Yet witness for me, heaven, that sensual and abandoned, as my past life has been, no gross idea ever mixed with hers, nor did her beautiful form ever raise one thought, that even she need blush to hear.

“ I DO not my lord, affect to place this purity of sentiment to the account of my own honour, or even my friendship for you. No, I confess myself indebted for it to her charming image, which ever appeared to my delighted sense, accompanied by that uncommon delicacy that graces every word and action of her spotless life.—That, like a sacred talisman, has charmed the unruly passions of my mind, and made me only feel the pangs of hopeless love.

“ Such a confession, as I have now made, my lord, will, I flatter myself, intitle me both to your regard and pity. I go self banished from all that I esteem, and love ; from you and lady Woodville.—It would be the height of impiety to doubt of her happiness : and a long continuance of the blessings you now enjoy, is the kindest wish that I can make for you. Felicity like yours, admits of no addition.

“ When you have read this, my lord, burn and forget it, but let the unhappy writer be totally banished from your remembrance. Conceal my presumption, from the too lovely lady Woodville, lest her resentment should be added to the miseries of,

“ Your unhappy friend,

“ JAMES THORNTON.”

O FANNY, I am distressed beyond measure, by these two letters ! Why did this weak young man place his affections upon me ? Why not bestow them, where they were likely, if not certain, to meet with a return ? It is said, that love is involuntarily ; but I believe it is only so in very young or enervated minds.—If we will not struggle with our passions, they will surely overcome us ; but they may certainly be weeded out before they have taken too deep root.

I AM doubly distressed, by this unlucky attachment.—Poor Fanny Weston ! her passion for Sir James Thornton is but too visible ;—Would it not be cruel to attempt her cure, by letting her into this secret ? I know not how to act.—Why did my lord reveal his foolish letter ? or why did he not sigh, in secret, and conceal his ill-placed love ? O these audacious men ! they dare do any thing.

THERE is however, a degree of modesty, in his keeping the secret, while he was here. I am convinced, if he had given the slightest hint of it, I should have had detested him : even as it is, I feel myself offended, and in a very awkward situation. I shall certainly blush when I see my lord ; and yet, why should I be humbled by another person's folly ? What husband but mine, would have put such a letter into the hands of a wife ? Such a mark of confidence ought

ought to raise me, in my own opinion, as it is an undoubted proof, that I stand high in his. Pleasing reflection! dwell upon my mind, and banish every gloomy thought, that has obtruded there.

As Lucy's happiness is of infinite consequence to mine, I hope soon to hear, that she is lady Mount Wills.

Your's, as usual,

E. WOODVILLE.

L E T T E R XVIII.

Lady STRAFFON, to Lady WOODVILLE.

I CANNOT see why my dear Emily should be hurt or offended at Sir James Thornton's *innocent* passion? had he dared to avow it, to you, it would have lost *that title*, and should have been considered as an insult; but let the poor youth sigh in peace, for a few months, and I will venture to promise, that he will get the better of his folly.—Dying for love is a disorder, that comes not within our bills of mortality.

Not but I believe that a long and habitual fondness founded on reasonable hopes, will when destroyed, destroy life, with it.

“O the soft commerce! O the tender ties!

“Close twisted with the fibres of the heart,

“Which broken break it, and drain off the soul

“Of human joy, and make it pain to live.”

BUT these are not the sport of feelings, with which masters and misses, who fancy themselves

in love, are commonly affected; for though youth is the season, when we are most capable of receiving impressions, it is also the season, when they are most easily erased. I think I might venture to pronounce, that there are not five hundred couples in the cities of London and Westminster, who are married to their first love, and yet I firmly believe there are, at least, ten times that number of happy pairs; if so, what becomes of the first passion?

To be sure we now and then met with a foolish obstinate heart, that cherishes its own misery, and preserves the image of some worthless object, to the last moment of its existence. Among this simple class, I fear I shall be necessitated to rank my sister Lucy; for though she does not pretend to have the smallest objection to lord Mount Willis, yet can she not be prevailed upon, to give a final yes.

HIS behaviour, on this occasion is truly noble; for though I believe that never man was more in love, he has made it a point, both with Sir John and me, not to press Lucy, for her consent. I fear Sir John will grow angry, at last, and perhaps hurry her into a denial, which she will have reason to repent, all the days of her life.

HOWEVER, she will now have some time to recollect herself, as Sir John has this day, received a summons to attend his aunt lady Aston, who is dying, and will probably leave Lucy a large legacy:—That poor idiot, Sir James Miller has mortgaged the last foot of his estate; but then he has got rid of his wife—She died of a fever at Paris, twelve days ago. Upon the whole, I think fortune has been kinder to him than he deserved.

I AM much pleased with lord Woodville's behaviour in regard to the letter; but indeed, my
dear,

dear, you treat these trifling matters much too seriously and lest I should myself grow grave upon the subject, I shall bid you

Adieu.

F. STRAFFON.

L E T T E R XIX.

Lady WOODVILLE, to Lady STRAFFON.

Dear FANNY,

I HAVE not been well, these three or four days.—Lady Lawson, who is so good as to stay with me and all the *séje femmes* about me think that a certain event is nearer than I apprehended My lord's foster sister, who has been brought to bed about five weeks, is now in the house, and every thing is prepared for my *accouchement*.

My lord's tenderness seems doubled on this occasion.—He scarce ever leaves my apartment; he reads to me with his eyes oftener fixed on my countenance than the book, and seems to watch every change in my looks.—What a wretch I have been, Fanny! to suspect this amiable man of want of love? Would it not be sinning against him, yet more highly, to let him know my crime, by asking his forgiveness, for my unjust suspicions?

No, I will blush in silence, and humble myself before heaven, and you who alone are conscious of my folly.—Pardon thou great first author of my happiness! and thou dear parent, sister, guardian of my youth, excuse my weakness, that had well nigh dashed the cup of blessing

56 THE DELICATE DISTRESS.

bleſſing from me, or mingled it with bitterneſs for ever !

I HEAR my dear lord's tuneful voice inquiring for his Emily ? I come, my love ;

Adieu, my dear ſiſter,

E. WOODVILLE.

Lord WOODVILLE, to Lady STRAFFON.

[With the foregoing letter]

“ JOY to my dear lady Straffon, to Sir John, to miſs Straffon, and to all who love my Emily ! I have the tranſport to inform you, that ſhe has made me the happy father of a lovely boy ! and herſelf as well as her ſituation can admit. My ſiſter Lawſon, lady Harriet, and miſs Weſton, join in congratulations, and compliments to you, with your affectionate

WOODVILLE.”

Note, The letters from lady Straffon, that immediately follow this, contain only congratulations, and minute inquiries about her ſiſter's and nephew's health ; and as they are by no means intereſting, the editor thinks it better to omit them, and return to the correſpondence between lord Seymour and lord Woodville.

L E T.

L E T T E R XX.

Lord WOODVILLE, to Lord SEYMOUR.

My dear SEYMOUR,

I HAVE been at home now above a week, yet have purposely avoided writing to you, as your last interdicted me from mentioning the only subject of which I am capable of thinking. O Seymour! it is in vain to disguise it; my head and heart, are filled with her alone! Upon the exertion of any painful act of virtue, we flatter ourselves that we have absolutely conquered its opposite vice, or weakness; our vanity triumphs, and like the French, we frequently chant out *Te Deum*, without having gained a victory.

Too much I feel that this has been my case. I begin to fear that I shall not even be capable of disguising my unhappiness; and of practising this dissimulation, which in my singular situation should be deemed a virtue.

I HAVE discovered that lady Woodville has lately wept much; I once surprized her alone, in a flood of tears. I could not bear them: they reproached me, Seymour! but it was with silent anguish; I pressed to know the cause of her distress: had she revailed it, and but once upbraided me, though in the gentlest terms, I fear I should have thrown away the mask, avowed my passion, and quitted her for ever.

BUT her soft nature knew not how to chide, and seemed alarmed for fear she had offended. Her suffering gentleness unmanned me quite, or rather on the instant, it restored all that is worthy of the name of man, my reason, and my virtue: and I dare hope, that from that time,

she has been well deceived, and that I only am the victim of my own weakness.

I SHALL address this letter to London; I think it is more likely that it should meet you there at present, than at the hot wells. I intreat you will wait upon the marchioness, and tell her Seymour, what my heart endures; let me at least have some merit, from the sacrifice I have made, and not be deemed ungrateful, or insensible by her.

If you hear any thing of Ransford, let me know.—His father is outrageous at his conduct, and even I think he is to blame.

Adieu, my valued friend,

WOODVILLE.

L E T T E R XXI.

Lord SEYMOUR, to Lord WOODVILLE.

Dear WOODVILLE,

I AM sincerely sorry for your relapsing into a state of weakness, which must be always a state of misery. I confess I thought you in the surest train for happiness, as the having conquered ourselves, is the only subject I know for real exultation. But as your conduct has been truly noble, and that no person has suffered from what I now consider as your own misfortune, no one can have a right to reproach you; and it is for your own sake alone, that I now intreat you to struggle with your too partial attachment to an unworthy woman,

You desire me to acquaint her with the state of your heart; can you suppose me so weak as to comply with your request, were it within
my

my power ? But I must travel some miles to afford the fugitive conqueror the triumph you designed.

SHE set out from London, five days ago, with your friend Ransford. I hear they intend making the tour of Italy together. Prosperous gales, and calm seas, attend them !

You see when a lady is bent upon travelling she can easily supply herself with a Cicisbeo ; and I fancy that Ransford will be a much more agreeable companion, upon this party, than your lordship could possibly have been.—He carries not the stings of remorse about him, the bane of joy, or peace ! neglect of his father may sometimes possibly cloud his gaiety, but one glance from the bright eyes of the marchioness will quickly dispel the gloom.

WILL you forgive me for owning that I am transported at their union ? Would to heaven that you could receive joy from it also ! Had she fallen lower than she has done, it might have mortified your pride ; but if you can divest yourself of self-love, you must allow that Ransford is more calculated for a lover than you are. I think he bows with a better grace, sings charmingly, dances superlatively well, is more *adroit* in his person, it above an inch taller, and has ten times your vivacity.

I BOTH hope, and believe, that they are married ; and as Ransford does not want penetration, he may possibly have discovered your attachment to her ; he will therefore probably prevent her returning to England, for some years. Let her but keep out of your way, and I care not what becomes of her.

Do, my dear Woodville, let me congratulate your escape from that Circe ! and rejoice with you in the amiable character of her, whom
Providence

Providence has designed to bless your future days !

I HAVE business that will detain me in London, for this month to come ; the moment that is finished I will fly to Woodfort, and hope to find you and every one there, as happy as they ought to be ; to wish for more is in vain.

SEYMOUR.

L E T T E R XXII.

Lord WOODVILLE, to Lord SEYMOUR.

HOW could my cruel friend attempt to jest with misery like mine ! It is impossible ! —It must not, cannot, be ; the marchioness gone off with Ransford ! by heaven it is false, though thou, my dearest, truest friend, aver it ! You thought to cure my passion by this legend ; but you have blown the sleeping embers to a flame ; and honest indignation for the injury she sustains, adds fuel to the fire.

RANSFORD ! why Ransford knew her not six weeks ago.—Their first meeting was at York.—He must have seen her passion.—She could not disguise it ; nay, I know she would not—She is above disguise.

WHY, Seymour, should you treat me like a child, and strive to impose impossibilities upon me ? how can a heart, that has felt what yours has done, sport with a lover's anguish ? I am impatient till I send off this, that by the messenger you may restore her peace, and clear my honour. O ! you have set my bosom all on fire ! be quick, and quench the blaze, lest it consume the

the innocent cause of all my wretchedness, along with your distracted friend.

WOODVILLE.

P. S. The servant who carries this, must neither sleep nor eat, till he brings back your answer. I shall do neither till I receive it. For pity sake, my friend, trifle no farther, but at once relieve, and excuse the distraction you have caused.

L E T T E R XXIII.

Lord SEYMOUR, to Lord WOODVILLE.

WELL mayest thou call thyself distracted Woodville! and I as such, can pity and forgive thee.—Yet must I not become infected by thy folly, and treat thee like a wayward child indeed.

As I would not have descended to a falsehood, even to have cured you of your weakness, for I cannot call it passion, so neither shall I sooth you now, by contradicting the truth that I have already asserted; and however impossible it may appear to you, that the marchioness should so quickly enter into any engagements with Ransford, it is most certain, that they left London, in the same post-chaise, on Monday sennight, and that she declared her intention of visiting Italy to my sister Sandford, who was extremely scandalized at her behaviour, with regard to Mr. Ransford, during the short time she staid in town, since they returned from York.

Be assured that I am sincerely affected by the miserable condition of your mind.—I cannot help

help considering you as in a state of fascination ; for if your reason could operate at all, you could not possibly be astonished, that a woman, who had jilted you four years ago, and preferred age and disease to you, when she professed to love you, and when it was in your power to marry her, should abandon you now, that she cannot be your wife, for a lively, agreeable man, who is, probably, as much enamoured of her, though not quite so romantic as your lordship.

As you are not, at present in a situation to receive any benefit from the admonitions of friendship, I shall reserve my sentiments for a fitter occasion, and not detain your servant longer, than while I subscribe myself

Still yours.

SEYMOUR.

L E T T E R XXIV.

Lord WOODVILLE, to Lord SEYMOUR.

YES, Seymour, I will own I have been mad ; I wake as from a dream : yet why, my kind, my cruel friend, have you recovered me from that delirium, which, like an opiate, while it weakened, soothed my enfeebled sense, and left me scarce a wish to struggle with my malady ? Yes, she is gone ! my friend repeats it, and it must be true.

MARRIED to Ransford ! Can I yet believe it ? “ O may the furies light their nuptial torch ! ” Dissembling, cruel woman ! she saw the anguish of my breaking heart, when honour triumphed over my self-love, and prevented my accepting the sacrifice she offered, to her destruction.

PERHAPS

PERHAPS, that stung her pride, perhaps, she loves me still, but could not bear to be rejected by me.—Perhaps, I have undone her peace, as she has mine.—O no! a younger, gayer, newer lover, absorbs all thoughts of me! I am forgotten, and I will forget

—not Isabella! my life, my soul, my love!

Do not detest me, Seymour; I would, but cannot conquer this disease.

THE moment I had sent off Williams, with my last to you, I ordered my horses, and rode off thirty miles, towards London, not only to be so much nearer the return of my express, but to prevent lady Woodville from observing my distraction.

WHEN I had got about five miles from Woodfort, I sent back my servant, to let her know, that I should spend three or four days, in hunting with Sir William Atkinson, whom I just then met, going up to London.

I HAD settled my plan with Williams, who returned, even quicker, than I thought is possible. I have now spent three days at a wretched inn, where, were it in my choice, I would remain for ever. Here I can curse, and I can weep—but the innocent lady Woodville may be rendered unhappy, by my stay.—She loves me, as I loved the———Let me not name her.

SIR James Thornton leaves us in a few days. I must return to Woodfort.—O write soon! and once more say, you pity and forgive,

Your's, ever,

WOODVILLE.

L E T.

L E T T E R XXV.

Lord SEYMOUR, to Lord WOODVILLE.

Dear WOODVILLE,

I WRITE to you merely because you desire it; for I am well convinced, that nothing which I, or the greatest philosopher that ever existed, could say to you, would have any effect upon your mind, in its present state; and my own is, at this instant, so extremely agitated, that I am scarce capable of writing at all.

I HAVE, this day, received a letter, from Captain Beaumont — The contents will amaze you. About six weeks ago, the acknowledged son of madame de Beaumont, was taken ill of the small pox; and as her daughter had never had it, the general and she thought proper to send her to a friend's house, lest her beauty should be endangered by the infection.

THIS young lady, now about fifteen, who had never been out of her mother's sight before, happened, in the family she was placed in, to become acquainted with a young musqueteer, handsome, and accomplished, but without rank or fortune. They quickly became enamoured of each other; and, at the end of a fortnight, eloped together, and got safe into Holland. They might, possibly, have been overtaken, and prevented from marrying, if the lady, to whose care Maria Beaumont was entrusted, had not dreaded the violence of madame de Beaumont's temper, so much that she did not dare to inform her of the misfortune, till it was past remedy.

IN the mean time, the young, and by all accounts amiable, heir of the family, expired in his

his father's arms. The violent agitation of madame de Beaumont's mind threw her into a raging fever.—During her delirium, she raved incessantly, on the ingratitude and baseness of Maria, and her own inhumanity to the unhappy Charlotte.

THE general, who now considered himself as childless, gladly laid hold on the opportunity of endeavouring to recover those he had formerly, *not lost, but thrown away*—he therefore prevailed on madame de Beaumont to see Charlotte. He went himself to the convent, and having declared his hitherto concealed affinity to Charlotte, he obtained leave from the abbess, to let her visit her dying mother.

BUT no tongue or pen can express the various emotions of surprize, grief, and joy, which were occasioned by the sight of his lovely daughter, when she cast herself at his feet, to receive his benediction.—Like poor old Lear he would have knelt to her, and begged forgiveness.

BUT when she presented herself on her knees, by the bedside of madame de Beaumont, the unhappy woman, unable to sustain the sight of so much injured beauty, fainted quite away; but the moment she was recovered to her reason, she called for Charlotte, and never let her quit her sight, or ceased to pour forth blessings on her, and implore her pardon till she expired.

BEFORE she died, she intreated Charlotte to quit the convent, and remain with her unhappy father while he lived. She desired that a dispensation from her vows might be immediately solicited from the Pope, and that captain Beaumont, and lord Seymour might be sent for, in order to obtain their forgiveness. But only one of her wishes was accomplished.—captain Beau-
mont

mont arrived, about two hours before her death ; she saw, and blessed him.

HE writes me word, that neither his father, nor himself, can prevail on Charlotte, to think of returning into the world again ; but that she has consented to go into the country with them, for a couple of months, merely in hopes of reconciling the general to his youngest daughter. He desires me to *fly* to Belville, that I may at least see his sister, before she is again secluded from the world for ever.

O WOODVILLE ! I want but *wings*, to obey him ! But hark, my chariot wheels rattle, and my impatient heart, much more than beats responsive to the horses feet.

Adieu, adieu, my friend.

SEYMOUR.

L E T T E R XXVI.

Lord WOODVILLE, to Lord SEYMOUR.

I KNOW not whither to congratulate or console with my dear Seymour, on the very extraordinary events that have happened in the Beaumont family. His feelings, I know, must arise from those of his beloved Charlotte ; and I am, at present, doubtful, whether she will ever again recover in the same degree, that peaceful resignation, which we may suppose she had acquired, and was in full possession of, a few weeks ago.

ALL the passions of that gentle nature must now be roused to tumult ; the sight of her dear Seymour must give her joy, transporting joy ! which is as much an enemy to peace, as the most poignant

poignant misery. And yet, again, must she be torn from all the social ties of human life ; again be buried in that *quick* sepulchre, a convent !

Do not, my friend, indulge a single thought of her returning back, into the world.—It cannot be : Charlotte Beaumont will not be prevailed upon, even by the man she loves, to break her vows to heaven : for though I believe her possessed of the most exalted virtue, she cannot, possibly, be free from superstition, as she is both a woman and a catholic.

You will, perhaps, be surprized at my writing to you in this strain ; but I would wish you to guard your heart against its greatest foe, against self-delusion, Seymour ! that fly, slow, underminer of our reason, and our peace ! that lying, whispered to my weak presumption, I might behold the marchioness, unmoved ! Fatal, ! fatal error ! it has undone me, Seymour ! But I will think, I mean speak, of her no more.

I HAVE an anecdote to tell you, which convinces me, that Adam's curse is intailed on all his offspring.

“ For either,
 “ He never shall find out fit mate, but such
 “ As some misfortune brings him, or mistake ;
 “ Or whom he wishes most, shall seldom gain,
 “ Through her perverseness ; but shall see her
 gained,
 “ By a far worse ; or, if she loves, withheld
 “ By parents ; or, his happiest choice, too late
 “ Shall meet, already linked and wedlock-bound,
 “ To a fell adversary, his hate, or shame :
 “ Which infinite calamity shall cause
 “ To human life, and household peace confound.”

THORNTON

THORNTON quitted Woodfort, three days ago.——The morning he went off, he left a letter for me, which contained an absolute declaration of the most ardent passion for lady Woodville! You may perhaps, think he was a little out in the choice of a confidant—by no means, I assure you. I inclosed his letter immediately to my wife, and felt myself really concerned for his misfortune. Emily is certainly capable of inspiring the most delicate passion; Thornton was a second Cymon, when he first saw her; and I may with great truth say, that with all the beauties of an Iphigene, she is possessed of every amiable virtue that can inspire esteem and respect. —I would give millions to change passions with him.

I CAN scarce hope to hear from you, while the charming delirium of your happiness lasts; but when you return again to reason and misery, I shall then be a proper companion for your affliction. But in every situation of life I shall remain unalterably,

your's,

WOODVILLE.

L E T T E R XXVII.

Lady STRAFFON, to Lady WOODVILLE.

AS my dear Emily may yet be considered as an invalid, I think myself bound to write every day, and every thing that can possibly contribute to her amusement, without expecting or waiting for any acknowledgment of my letter.

SIR

SIR John returned last night, from paying his last duty to his aunt lady Alton, and very well she has paid him for his attendance. She has bequeathed to him the pleasant manor of Ashfield, which is worth between eight and nine hundred pounds a year ; and made him her residuary legatee, when he has paid her bequests of twelve thousand pounds to Lucy, a thousand pounds apiece, to my children, and some few legacies to old servants.

As soon as Sir John had acquainted us with this agreeable news, he asked Lucy, if she was yet determined, with regard to lord Mount Willis ? when, to my great pleasure and surprize, she answered Yes, I think I shall be ready to give him my hand before this day se'nnight ; though I cannot positively fix the day, as lawyers are dilatory folks.

SIR John then began to rally her, on what he imagined to be her attention to settlements, &c. and told her that my lord and he would take care of all those matters without her assistance. She answered with a very stedfast countenance and determined air, You will pardon me, brother ; for once, and only once in my life, I am resolved to act for myself.—Now hear my resolution, which I desire you will communicate to lord Mount Willis to-morrow morning.

WHEN his lordship did me the honour to address me, I had then but five thousand pounds, a fortune much too small to be an object of consideration, to him ; but neither he nor you knew at that time, that I had but a use, even in that small sum for life.

SIR John attempted to interrupt her, by inquiring what she meant ? she begged that he would suffer her to proceed without interruption, and went on.—The severe treatment I met with at the
same

same time, from Sir James Miller, made me at that time, resolve that I would never marry.—We little know our hearts in many particulars of life ; but least of all in this.

BUT the extreme kindness I met with, at the same time, from lady Straffon, laid me under such indeliable obligations, as no time nor circumstance can ever efface. I then determined, nay declared, that I would bequeath my fortune to my niece Emily ; and no power on earth shall make me alter my resolution.

FROM my aunt's unmeritted goodness to me, it is now in my power to fulfil my intentions before my death, and to give a proof of that gratitude, which I owe to my more than sister. Again both Sir John and I would have broken in on her discourse, but she beckoned for silence.

WHEN this, the first wish of my heart, is accomplished, I shall still have a much better fortune than lord Mount Willis first expected with me.—But it must not be all his. Sir James Miller has been in some degree conducive to that happiness, which I expect and hope for from an union with his lordship. Sir James is poor and wretched ; justly punished for his crimes, but not rewarded, for the benefits he has conferred on me.—Some small provision must be made for him, without his ever knowing from whom he receives it. I formerly looked upon him with horror and aversion ; I now consider him as my benefactor ; and the saving him from the miseries of extreme poverty, will relieve my mind from a sort of mental debt.

SIR John could forbear no longer, but clasping her in his arms said, Providence had made him rich indeed, when it had bestowed such treasures on him, as his wife and sister. Both he and I
said

said every thing to dissuade her, from her intended gift to Emily, but in vain.

SIR John seemed to hint as if he thought it would be better that her generous intentions towards Sir James Miller, should be executed by lord Mount Willis, rather than herself. By no means, brother, replied Lucy; were there a remain of tenderness for him, in my heart, the world should not bribe me to marry its sole lord. Generosity should flow from principle, not from passion; and, as I can truly boast that this action, with regard to Sir James Miller, arises from the first source, nothing must change the current of it. My conduct on this occasion is, I think the highest compliment that I can pay to lord Mount Willis, and I have not a doubt of his considering it, in that high light.

WE both acquiesced in her opinion, and Sir John waited on lord Mount Willis this morning, to inform him of Lucy's intentions. He says he never saw any person so transported as his lordship; he said he had ever looked upon Lucy as the most amiable of women, but that her generosity to Sir James Miller made him now look up to her, as to a superior being; and that if she gave thousands he ought to give ten thousands, to the unhappy man, who had been in any degree instrumental to his felicity.

THIS will be a whimsical contest, I think, Emily, but I do not fancy that Lucy will consent to my lord's interfering with her designs. At present, she intends to lay out four thousand pounds, in an annuity for Sir James; which if he continues to live abroad, may support him decently.

I HAVE been this day to bespeak a pair of diamond buckles, and a very fine egrette, which Sir John and I mean to present her with. I know
lord

lord Mount Willis's family jewels are very rich, but my dear Lucy's virtues will outshine them all—Indeed she is an honour, not only to her sex, but to human nature.

SHE joins with me in intreating yours, and lord Woodville's company at her wedding. Surely my Emily will not refuse us both! you can have no doubts but that your little boy will be taken every possible care of, and even a little month's absence, from that dear face, on which your dotage hangs, will make an amazing change for the better in it—He will be as handsome again by the time of your return to Woodfort.

LUCY writes this night to lady Harriet and Fanny Weston, to attend her nuptials,—All girls will fly to a wedding, so that you will be left totally alone, if you are so ill-natured as to deny our request.

WHO knows what a good example may do? —The pensive lady Harriet may perhaps be prevailed upon to sigh no more for her perjured swain, but may possibly be inclined to make some worthy man happy. As to Fanny Weston I am persuaded that the festivity of a wedding will intirely conquer her hopeless passion for the wandering Thornton. She is no Penelope, believe me; and I fancy Mr. Wills, my lord's brother, will be able to banish the errant knight quite out of her mind.

ADIEU, my dear Emily. I hope you will make me happy in your next, by telling me that I shall soon have the pleasure of seeing you. Indeed I want nothing else at present to compleat my felicity.

F. STRAFFON.

LET-

L E T T E R XXVIII.

Lady WOODVILLE to Lady STRAFFON.

My dear FANNY,

I AM extremely charmed, but not surprized at Lucy's conduct.—there is every thing to be expected from *sensibility* and *delicacy* joined; but indeed I have scarce ever known them separated in a female heart. Refined manners are the natural consequences of fine feelings, which will even in an untutored mind form a species both of virtue and good breeding, higher than any thing that is to be acquired, either in courts or schools; but when these two qualities receive every addition that education and example can bestow,

“ When youth makes such bright objects still more bright,

“ And fortune sets them in the strongest light;

“ 'Tis all of Heaven that we below may view,

“ And all but adoration is their due.”

THUS do I think of our dear Lucy; yet I must say that she has been uncommonly fortunate in having such an opportunity of exerting the noble qualities of her heart, and proving how much superior she is to the detestable meanness of malice or revenge. Charming girl! may she be as happy as she deserves!

SHE, as well as you, has intreated me to partake happiness.—Alas, Fanny! though grief is contagious, we cannot always sympathize with joy—strange perverseness of our natures, that accepts the evil, and rejects the good! Do not

from this, suspect me of malevolence, or suppose that I do not truly rejoice in Lucy's felicity. But there is, I know not why, a kind of weight that hangs upon my mind, which I find it impossible to remove. Perhaps change of place may help to shake it off.—Be that as it may, I shall certainly comply with your's and Lucy's request.

My lord has kindly promised to accompany me, and our sweet little babe is to be left at lady Lawson's. Indeed, Fanny, you scarce can think what a sacrifice I make to quit him for a day; but he will be under the protection of the best of women.

I FEAR there is a scene preparing that will trouble her repose. That bad miss Fanning! what a heart must hers be? how void of gratitude! and where that virtue is wanting, there can subsist no other.—Neither precept nor example can operate on base minds.

Is it not strange that nature should vary so much in the human genius as to create a Lucy Straffon, and a Mary Fanning! so nearly of the same age too; both descended from good families; and both well educated. 'The animal creation do not differ thus from their own species. There are no furious sheep, nor mild tigers.—Nature is uniform in all her works, but man.—Hapless variety! sad source of misery! the tiger and the lamb are not less similar than the betrayer, and betrayed—yet both wear the same form, and only by experience is the difference found.—Nay, sometimes we have seen the fairest face conceal the vilest heart; as lurks the serpent underneath the rose.—This is a mortifying subject; I will no more of it.

FANNY Weston, as you guessed, is in high spirits, at the idea of Lucy's wedding.—She talks

talks of nothing but dress, equipage, and jewels, ever since it has been mentioned—but a new subject is of infinite use in the country; and I do not know whether a great funeral had not entertained her quite as much.—Nodding plumes and painted escutcheons will amuse the imagination, when gilt coaches and gay liveries do not come in the way.—

HAPPY trisler! how I envy her——yet I am sure she loves Lucy, and fancies that she is really enamoured of Sir James Thornton too.—I am certain that lady Harriet would gladly be excused from going to London, but I will not seem to see which way her inclinations tend.

“ The silent heart, which grief affails,
 “ Treads soft and lonesome, o’er the vales.
 “ Sees daisies open, rivers run,
 “ And seeks, as I have vainly done,
 “ Amusing thought; but learns to know,
 “ That solitude’s the nurse of woe.”

And a sort, and tender nurse it is—but dissipation may perhaps be good for us all, and lady Harriet shall try the recipe as well as

Your affectionate, &c.

E. WOODVILLE.

L E T T E R XXIX.

Lady STRAFFON to Lady WOODVILLE.

I THINK myself extremely obliged to my dear Emily, for her compliance with her friend's request.—You cannot conceive what delightful effects the hopes of seeing you have produced in Hill-street.—Sir John talks of nothing else but the *sparkler*; you know he used to call you so.—Lucy is all gratitude for your kindness, and my little Emily holds up her head most amazingly, that her aunt may observe what a fine carriage she has, and how much she is grown since she saw her.—The servants are all transported with double joy for Lucy's wedding, and your arrival. In short, every one wears a smiling face, and I shall not pardon it, if there should appear the smallest trace of gloom on yours.

I AM very sorry for what you hint at, with regard to lady Lawson—but be assured, that a woman should be thoroughly convinced, not only of her husband's attachment, but of his morals also, before she intrudes a female inmate, younger, though perhaps not fairer than herself.

THE caution should be equally attended to, with regard to male intimates.—I have seldom known an habitual friendship, that did not kindle, into what is called love, where there have been youth, beauty, and unceasing opportunity to fan the flame.

I THINK, if I were in lady Lawson's case, I should not feel much—for the heart of a man who is capable of seducing a young creature, that is immediately under his protection, can never be worth regretting. I have always heard that

that Sir William is a very debauched man ; and a truly delicate woman cannot preserve her affection for such a one, long.—Contempt must follow vice ; and where we once despise, we soon must cease to love.

NOR do I look upon Miss Fanning as an object of pity—bred up, as she has been, with so excellent a woman, one should suppose her heart replete with every virtue ;—but she cannot, possibly, be possessed even of the common merits, which we expect from a chambermaid, when she can descend to prostitution, without temptation.

HAD she been led astray by an agreeable young man, I could have pitied, nay, perhaps, have loved, and even esteemed her ; for I am not such an Amazon in ethics, as to consider a breach of chastity, as the highest crime that a woman can be guilty of ; though it is certainly the most unpardonable folly ; and I believe there are many women who have erred in that point, who may have more real virtue, aye, and delicacy too, than half the sainted dames who value themselves on the preservation of their chastity ; which, in all probability, has never been assailed. She alone who has withstood the solicitations of a man she fondly loves, may boast her virtue ; and I will venture to say, that such an heroine will be more inclined to pity, than despise the unhappy victims of their own weakness.

I HAVE sported my opinion upon this subject very freely ; you must therefore allow me to explain myself more clearly. I know your delicacy will be hurt if I do not ; and I may expect to be severely attacked by my dear little prude.

FIRST then I confine my fair penitents to the first choice ; a second error of this sort is never to be pardoned.—Passion is the only excuse that

can possibly be made for such a transgression; and a woman who has made such a sacrifice to love alone may be perfectly satisfied, that she can never be subject to that passion in the same degree again. For there never is above one human creature that we can love *better than ourselves*.

THE woman who receives two gallants, is in my mind, quite upon a footing with the most venal beauties; whose capacious hearts scorn to be limited to any number. All married ladies I absolutely exclude from my order of amiable unfortunates—they cannot even pretend to be deceived;—whereas a simple girl, however mean her condition, may flatter herself, that her lover's intentions are honourable. Old legends tell of king Cophetua and the beggar maid; and your Pamelas, and your Mariannes, encourage hope in young untutored minds, which perhaps the artful destroyer takes the utmost pains to encrease; “ ’till they can trust, and he betray no more.”

THIS is, I confess, a nice subject for a woman to treat upon; but I promise you I will endeavour to make my girl distinguish between vice and weakness; and I hope while she detests the one, she will be always ready to pity, and if in her power to protect the other.—There is no character I so heartily abominate as that of the *outrageously virtuous*. I have seen a lady render herself hateful to a large company, by repeating perhaps a forged tale of some unhappy frail one, with such a degree of rancour and malevolence, as is totally inconsistent with the calm dignity of real virtue.

HAVE you ever read a fable, which is bound up with Mr. Moore's, but was written by Mr. Brooke, called the Female Seducers? I think it
the

the prettiest thing that ever was written upon this subject.—To that I refer you for my sentiments at large.

YOUR remark upon the diversity of natures, amongst the human species, is pretty and ingenious;—but when we consider the amazing variety there is in the animal creation, and how many of them are noxious, we cannot wonder that there should be some difference in human kind. Had we been all formed with equal virtues, those very virtues would have been rendered useless;—an insipid tameness would have prevented emulation, and life would have become a perfect sinecure.

ON the other hand, were we all vicious, disorder and confusion must take place, and this world be quickly reduced to its primitive chaos. Without temptation, there could be no virtue; and without virtue, this world could not subsist.—We should not be so much pleased with the gentleness of the lamb, if there was no animal more fierce, nor should we feel the sweetness of the woodlark's note, so sensibly as we do, if we had never heard the screech-owl's voice, or the croaking of the raven. It is by comparison alone, that we are capable of estimating good and evil, both in the moral and natural sense.

I COULD illustrate my argument, as fully amongst our own species, as in the brute creation; but I have drawn this letter to such an immoderate length, that I must at least defer the remainder of my discourse, parson like, to another opportunity.

EVERY thing is settled to Lucy's mind; and lord Mount Willis's happy day is fixed for Saturday.

turday fortnight. I hope you will come to town next week; till then,

Adieu,

my ever dear Emily.

F. STRAFFON.

L E T T E R XXX.

Lady WOODVILLE to Lady STRAFFON.

Dear FANNY,

I SHOULD have answered your letter by last post, but was prevented, by having company. The two miss Withers's spent three days with us. —I told you before, they were charming women; but agreeable as I first thought them, I now think them ten times more so.

THE eldest is extremely sensible, and perfectly accomplished, but of a grave turn; the youngest has every merit of her sister, with the most engaging vivacity imaginable. She is soon to be married to an Irish nobleman. —Happy man, who is to be blessed with such a companion!

SHE seems to feel some regret at the thoughts of quitting her friends and England; but says she is sure that her lord will be so good to let her visit them sometimes; and she would by no means, wish to detach him from his native country, or prevent his spending that fortune in it, which he derives from it.

Miss Withers is gone to Ireland, with her sister. I am almost sorry that I ever was acquainted with these sweet girls, since I am to lose the pleasure of their society so soon. They told me a piece of news, which though it surprized, did not displease me. —Mr. Ransford is married to

to the marchioness of St. Aumont, and they are now in France together.

Is it not odd, that my lord never mentioned this particular, as it is no secret in the country? and he must certainly know it, as he has been once or twice to see Sir Harry Ransford. But I think you desired me never to pry into his motives for any thing; and I obey.

INDEED, Fanny, you appear to me to affect the stoic too much, from what you say about lady Lawson; but we can all bear the misfortunes of others with great fortitude,

“When they are lash’d, we kiss the rod,
Resigning to the will of God.”

IN my mind, lady Lawson’s trial is a very fiery one.—She is, she must be doubly distressed. As to the slight infidelities of husbands, I think the wife must be contemptible who resents them; but every woman, that truly loves her husband, wishes to preserve his heart; and a consciousness of his attachment to another object, must be productive of the most poignant anguish. Happy, happy sister! that have never felt that ‘Hydra of calamity.’

I GRANT that Sir William Lawson has ever been a debauched man, but always had, except in this instance, so much regard to his lady, to decency and humanity as to conceal his vices from her: He therefore, had not forfeited her esteem, though she had lost his love—O loss beyond repair! Then her affection for that wretch miss Fanning, must add to her distress. Not having been blessed with children, she looked upon this worthless girl as her own daughter—and can she in a moment forget the tenderness

She has indulged so long, and detest the wicked couple, as she ought——impossible !

I AM really angry at your philosophic insensibility upon this occasion,—for my part, I can scarce behave with common civility, either to Sir William or miss Fanning. But lady Lawson, who is a saint, behaves with her usual kindness to them both, nor has ever seemed to have discovered or hinted the least suspicion, of what is already too visible to the whole country.—Yet her lovely face is emaciated and pale ; and sometimes, involuntarily sighs and tears escape her.

I KNOW my lord is extremely distressed, on this occasion, he loves his sister tenderly ; but fears his interposing might possibly make Sir William lay aside all restraint, and perhaps, occasion a separation from his wife. I am glad, for this reason, that we are leaving the country, as I imagine miss Fanning's situation will make her removal necessary, before we return to Woodfort.

You need not have apprehended my dissenting from your generous sentiments with regard to the unhappy victims of love.—Nay I carry my humanity further, and feel for those who, without strong passion, fall a sacrifice to the vile arts of their seducer, and their own weakness. That unsuspecting confidence, which is too frequently the cause of womens ruin, must certainly arise from a generous disposition ; and I should look upon a young innocent girl, who was armed at all points like a Moor of Moor-hall, to be an unnatural character.

AT the same time, I detest a vicious woman, more than any thing in the creation ; and for this reason, my compassion does not extend to married ladies in general, any more than yours.—They have always a protector to fly to ; who
upon

upon that occasion, if upon no other, will with open arms receive them—for though every man may not love his wife, every man is certainly jealous of his honour; and the false notions of the world are, at present so constituted, that the failure of a woman brings infamy upon her husband; while in a much more pitiable case, it rests solely upon the injured unfortunate.

HOWEVER, Fanny, I agree with you, this is too nice a subject for a female pen; though one is insensibly led into reflections that are humiliating to an honest mind. But when he who knew the frailty of our natures, adjudged the convict criminal, his sentence was not severe; for well he knew it was impossible there could be found a wretch so lost to humanity as to throw a stone.

LET not the young, the gay, the rich, the fortunate, whose situations in life have prevented their being liable to temptation, like an herd of deer, turn their armed brows against their wounded friend, and give her to the hunters!

MISS Withers and I were last night talking upon this subject, and she repeated a little poem, that lord Digby, her sister's lover, had shewn her. It was written upon a particular occasion, at a water-drinking place in Ireland called Mal-low, some years ago.—The unfortunate subject of it had been a much admired character in that place, a few seasons before, and dignified by the title of Sappho.

THE lines are extremely pretty; turn over, and you will find them in the next page.

VERSES

V E R S E S

WRITTEN AT THE

Fountain at Mallow, in the County of Cork,
in Ireland.

Thou azure fount, whose chrystal stream,
Was once a nobler poet's theme,
While to inspire the tuneful strain,
Sappho was called, nor called in vain.
Ah let the good forgive ! if here,
I pay the tribute of a tear,
In tender grief for Sappho's fate,
The wonder of thy banks so late.
So many virtues were thy share,
'Thou most accomplished, ruin'd fair !
One error sure may be forgiven,
And pardon find from Earth and Heaven.
That sovereign Power made us all ;
Suffered the sons of light to fall !
And oft to mortify our pride,
From virtue lets the wisest slide.
Ye fair, no more her faults proclaim ;
For your own sakes, conceal her shame ;
Since if a nymph so wise could fail,
We well may think Ye all are frail !

A TRUCE for the present with this, and
every other subject, but the pleasing thought of
our meeting, which I hope will be on Tuesday
evening next,

Till then,
adieu.

E. WOODVILLE.
P. S.

P. S. WE have got a furnished house, in St. James's-street; and I am strongly tempted to bring my sweet little Harry with me.—Cruel Fanny, never to mention my little cherub! but *I'll be revenged, and love him better for it.*

L E T T E R XXXI.

Lady WOODVILLE to Lady LAWSON.

London, Jan. 18.

A THOUSAND thanks to my dear lady Lawson, for the pleasing account she has given me, of herself, and my dear little boy. You will perhaps, think me ill natured, for rejoicing that you have no other companion at present; but I am not so selfish as you imagine, upon this occasion; for I well know that the most agreeable company in the world could not abate your affectionate attention to him.

BUT there are certain situations in life, when our dearest friends become irksome to us from an apprehension that they may possibly discover what we wish to hide.—There needs no other illustration of my opinion, than a fair confession, that I have sometimes, seen you under these very circumstances, with your brother and myself—But I hope and believe you will never again experience them. I may now speak freely upon a subject, which though your virtue and goodness concealed, Sir William has thought proper to mention to my lord with every eulogium on your conduct, which noble as has been, it could deserve.

Miss Fanning set out for Yorkshire this morning, truly sensible of your goodness, and her

her own unworthiness. Sir William says he is certain, that it is not in your nature to detest her as much as she does herself. He told my lord that this affair was by no means so unfortunate an event, with regard to you two as it might at first have appeared to be ; as your behaviour had not only made him esteem and admire, but love you also, a thousand degrees more than he ever had done before.

He declared that he felt the impatience of a lover, to throw himself at your feet, and said he never should forgive himself for having rendered you unhappy by his infamous conduct. Joy, joy, to my dear sister ! will you forgive my saying, that I envy your situation ?

I WOULD give you an account of lady Mount Willis's wedding, dress, equipage, &c. &c. did I not know that your full heart can have no room to entertain such trifling ideas. But I am certain it will give you pleasure to hear that lord Mount Willis is as amiable and accomplished as his charming bride, and that I think they have the fairest prospect of a long uninterrupted course of happiness.

As the house of lords are now sitting, your brother purposes staying in town, till March ; but I may whisper to you what I would not have him hear, that I cannot help regretting so long an absence from Woodfort, from my child, and from yourself.

LADY Harriet, my sister Straffon, and Fanny Weston, present their more than compliments, and my lord joins in love and sincere congratulations, with your

Truly affectionate,

WOODVILLE.

L E T.

L E T T E R XXXII.

Lord WOODVILLE, to Lord SEYMOUR.

IS it possible that my dear Seymour can be so totally absorbed in his own felicity as to make him entirely forget his absent, his unhappy friend? I have been above two months in London, without hearing from you! Miss Straffon's marriage with lord Mount Willis brought lady Woodville and me to town.

I CONFESS I flattered myself that a change of objects and a scene of dissipation, would have assisted me, in conquering the gloomy disease that hangs upon my mind. Far from it, I think it has rather increased my malady, by laying me under greater restraints than I experienced at Woodfort; as all humours both of the mind and body, acquire additional force if they are denied a vent.

As my ill fortune would have it, we are lodged in the same house the marchioness lived in; and to add to my distress, there is a picture of hers, which was not finished when she went away, that is hung up in my dressing-room. As lady Woodville was coming to speak to me yesterday morning, she overheard me in earnest discourse with the fair shadow; she immediately retired, supposing there was some company with me.

WHEN we met at dinner, she smiling asked me who the lady was that came to visit me, in the morning. I could not for some time, conceive the meaning of her question; but when from the naiveté of her discourse, I understood it, I was all confusion, and your sister lady Sandford, who was at table with us, gave me a look, that perfectly

perfectly convinced me she was acquainted with my folly.

THE inhuman marchioness must have revealed my weakness to her.—Seymour could not betray his friend ! Yet may I not from hence deduce a kind of tacit compliment to myself, by supposing she must have been vain of her conquest, when she proclaimed it ? weak consolation ! like a drowning wretch, I catch at rushes !

WHY, why can I not tear her fatal image from my breaking heart ! you have seen her, Seymour ? It is a thousand years since I beheld her—Have age and ugliness yet overtaken her, or is she lovely still ? Excuse my raving—such I know it will appear to you.

I KNOW not whether I told you that lady Woodville had presented me with a son, before we left the country, and appears if possible, still more amiable in the character of a mother, than before she was one.—I rejoice to think that her being a parent has added to her happiness, as well as her merit. Our virtue and our felicity are both increased, by the diffusion of our affections.—What a wretch am I then, Seymour, who feel all mine concentrated in one object, where they must rest for ever ?

This reflection on myself is too severe, nay most unjust ! for I declare, that I am sensible of the utmost tenderness, for the lovely, the unfending lady Woodville and I would die rather than render her unhappy—At the same instant I adore the cruel, insolent, ungrateful marchioness. What tortures must arise, from such a state of contradiction !

I AM truly impatient to know whether you have prevailed with your fair vestal, to renounce her vows, and enter once again into this world of cares ? Be assured I am sincerely interested in
every

every thing that relates to you ; and this, the most momentous point of your life, is of the utmost consequence

To your ever affectionate

WOODVILLE.

L E T T E R XXXIII.

Lord SEYMOUR to Lord WOODVILLE.

YES, Woodville, I confess it, I have been absorbed, entranced in the most delightful delusion that ever lull'd the restless heart of man ! I have passed three months in paradise ! I thought not of the world, nor of its cares—I even grudged the hours that nature claimed for rest, they robbed me of my Charlotte's tuneful voice, though her loved form oft visited my slumbers.—But the gay vision is now flown, and I indeed awake as from a dream !

You may suppose I reached Bellevue in as short a space of time as it was possible.—My Charlotte was prepared to meet me. At our first interview, through all the agonizing joy I felt, I perceived a steady calmness in her manner, that spoke the tender, the indulgent friend, not the fond mistress : the gravity of her dress added dignity to her deportment, and awed even my tumultuous wishes into silence. I looked up to her, as to a superior being ; and felt myself grow little in her sight. She took advantage of my first impressions, and spoke to me in the following manner.

You see before you, sir, the happiest of her sex, now first permitted to indulge those fond sensations, which nature plants in every human heart,

heart, filial, and sisterly affection.—I will confess myself still farther gratified by seeing you, the only object of a passion, which took its rise in youth and innocence, but which has long since matured into the firmest friendship, and rendered you—pardon me, my father! the first, the constant object of my prayers.

BUT let not the fond wishes of a father, or your own desires, tempt you to think that aught on earth can move me to exchange the state of tranquil happiness, I now enjoy for any other less pure, and more precarious. My vows were heard in heaven; they passed not forth from feigning or forced lips; for in the very moment I pronounced the words, my heart assented to the pious sounds, nor would I then have changed my situation, even to be lord Seymour's wife.

Nor do I now repent the choice I made, though fully satisfied both of your worth and love. Providence seemed to have planted insuperable bars between us, at the hour when I fixed my purpose to renounce the world; and my then torn heart found its sole peace in my humble acquiescence to his will.

Now mark me, Henry, this is the last time that I shall ever speak upon the subject, and it is in order to save your heart the pain of fruitless solicitation, that I explain my resolution. Should his Holiness be prevailed upon, by my father's entreaties, to grant me the indulgence he has requested, thus far I will, on my part comply with the general's desire.—I will spend one, two or three months, with him in this house, whenever he shall command me; but my place of residence must be the convent.—There I have sworn to live, and there I mean to die.

THERE

THERE was something so commanding and determined in Charlotte's voice and manner, even while she denounced a sentence so severe, that neither her brother who was present nor I, attempted once to interrupt her. When she had finished, I found my heart subdued, and ready to sacrifice its very wish to whatever seemed most conducive to her happiness. I was, alas! the fatal cause of the vows she had made, how then should I dare to solicit the breach of them!

TRUTH, Woodville, flashes conviction, even upon our passions, as swift as light obtrudes upon the eyes. I instantly felt the delicate impossibility of her being happy in the world, and as quickly resolved never to importune her to be wretched. It was not however without the sincerest regret, that I beheld my most sanguine hopes of happiness vanish once more into air.

SHE received my acquiescence with her determination, as the highest mark of my affection, and told me that she now considered me in a light, where the tenderest regard for my welfare was compatible with her duty; and that henceforward she could know no difference in her affection for captain Beaumont and lord Seymour.

FROM that time, Woodville, our days have been spent in the most delightful intercourse, and have stolen away almost unperceived by me. Charlotte's voice, which was ever charming, is now so highly improved, that no melody on earth can equal it. The good old general, who absolutely adores her, is frequently melted into tears while she sings; and upon all occasions gazes on her with a look of repentant sorrow and delight, as if conscious of the injury he has done to the world, by robbing it of such an ornament;

nament; while her charming countenance is lighted up with the animated looks of filial love.

SHE has prevailed on the general, to be reconciled to his youngest daughter and her husband. He has obtained the young man's release, and is to purchase him a commission immediately. As soon as that can be effected they will come here, and Charlotte will again retire into the convent, how do I dread the fatal hour of separation! and blush to think that even Charlotte's mind should be so far superior to my own!

WITHIN these few days she has frequently mentioned her going to Paris, with a look and manner almost expressive of impatience, yet chastened by the pain she sees it gives her father, brother and the unhappy Seymour. Must she again be torn from my fond eyes! Have I not sacrificed my wishes to her will, and will she rob me of the last sole delight of sometimes gazing on her?

HER brother tried to prevail on her to let me visit her at the convent, but she peremptorily refused; nor will she even consent to see him, except on particular business. Her father is the only person she will admit within those walls.—This is a self-imposed restraint, for the abbess is perfectly inclined to grant her every indulgence she can ask.

I KNOW nothing of the marchioness, Ransford, nor any other person at Paris. I shall certainly accompany Charlotte thither; and when there, shall acquaint you with every thing I hear about them. I am truly concerned that your infatuation for that worthless woman should still continue—O Woodville! had you lost such a treasure as I have, and by your own fault too, what would your situation have been! I will

will think of my miseries no more—but endeavour to enjoy the small portion of happiness that yet remains for me.

I CONGRATULATE you on being a father—may that tender tie awaken every pleasing sensation in your mind, and restore your heart to the amiable lady Woodville, who only can deserve it !

Direct your next to the hotel de——, at Paris ; and till I arrive there

Adieu.

SEYMOUR.

L E T T E R XXXIV.

Lord WOODVILLE to Lord SEYMOUR.

ONCE more returned to Woodfort's peaceful shades, escaped from crouds and noise, to gentle converse, and the sweet music of my vocal woods ; yet can I not enjoy the pleasing scene I have so much longed for—the cause of my coming hither embitters the satisfaction I hoped to find in being here. My Emily is in a bad state of health, occasioned as her physicians think, by the foggy air and hurry of London.

BUT, O Seymour ! to you I will confess the secret woundings of my troubled soul. I fear that sorrow preys upon her tender heart ; for from the time of our being at York, I have frequently imagined her mind was distressed ; but whenever she seemed to perceive that idea rising in my thought, she has instantly banished it, by assuming an air of chearfulness and vivacity ; and the transition was made with such amazing ease, that

that I thought it impossible she should be insincere, and that the gloomy medium of my own reflections, and not hers, had tinged her appearance with an air of sorrow. Can it be possible, Seymour, that a creature so young and innocent as lady Woodville, can be capable of disguising her sentiments, and hiding her grief in smiles !

I BEGIN to fear that women are our superiors in every thing. If she has perceived my passion for the marchioness, and concealed the anguish which such a discovery must occasion to a heart like hers, for well I know she fondly loves me, the story of the Spartan boy would no longer be repeated ; but lady Woodville be henceforth considered as the first example of human fortitude--In what a light then must *her lord* appear ! I cannot bear the thought.

WHEN the physicians first attended her, they advised her setting out immediately for the south of France, but she refused to go, with a more determined air and manner, than I had ever seen her assume before. I imagined her dislike arose from the thought of being separated from her son, and immediately assured her that he should go with us. She thanked me for my condescension, but said it had only removed one of her objections, and that not the strongest.

THEN, with a tear just starting from her eye, she intreated that I would not press her farther. I kissed away the pearly fugitive, as it stole down her cheeks, which was instantly lighted up, by the soft glow of joy and modesty.—She told me, then, she wished to return to Woodfort, and, if I pleased, she would go to Bristol when the season came on.

I ACQUIESCED in every thing she desired ; and would at that instant, as I would at this,
have

have laid down my life to procure her health and happiness. We set out immediately for this place.—For the first three or four days I thought her better ; since that I too plainly perceive that she declines.

IF she should die, Seymour, I shall consider myself as her murderer. Surely you would then allow me the painful pre-eminence of wretchedness, and acknowledge your situation, when compared to mine, to be like beds of roses to the rack. O no ! it must not be—she shall not die.

I NEVER was so impatient for any æra, as for the month of June.—I have great hopes from the Hot-wells, my Emily's youth, and naturally good constitution.

I HAD not the least expectation that your Charlotte would have been prevailed on to quit the convent ; indeed I scarcely hoped that she would have condescended as far as she has done, by consenting to spend a portion of every year at Bellevue. Happy Seymour ! to have such a subject for expectation before you.—It is surely one of the highest degrees of human felicity to look forward with hope.

You will pardon me if I think there is some faint trait of the coquette in her refusing to see you at the convent. She certainly wishes to keep your flame alive ; and as she does not mean to feed it with any thing more substantial than her conversation, she wisely thinks, that that, like all other enjoyments, might possibly pall upon the taste if too often repeated.

SHE has therefore enjoined you a long fast, in order to heighten your relish for the “ feast of reason.” You, I dare say, as a still passionate lover, may probably think this little *ruse d' amour* unnecessary ; but I am firmly persuaded, that
abstinence

abstinence will enhance the value of our mental, as well as corporeal pleasures.

A SERVANT has just informed me that lady Woodville is ready to ride out.—I attend her on horseback every day.

Adieu, my friend,

WOODVILLE,

P. S. I hope this will be a letter of credit for me in your books, as I have not once drawn upon your patience, by mentioning the marchioness.—Be generous then, my dear Seymour, and reward my self-denying virtue.

L E T T E R XXXV.

Lord SEYMOUR to Lord WOODVILLE.

My dear WOODVILLE,

I HAVE made an exchange directly opposite to yours, having just quitted the sweet scenes of Bellevue and my Charlotte's delightful converse for the irksome crowds and noise of this great city.

THE young musqueteer and his lady arrived at general Beaumont's, about a fortnight ago. Charlotte had fixed the time of her return to the convent, for the tenth day after they came, but her sister, madame de Carignon, being taken violently ill, made her postpone her journey, and made me hasten mine.

FROM the time that Maria complained, Charlotte never quitted her apartment.—Bellevue became a desert to me, and I fancied I should feel less regret, at being separated from her by distance than accident.—But the effects are the same,

be

be the cause what it may ; for there is no place or situation that can afford me happiness in her absence.

You treat Charlotte very severely, nay unjustly, by charging the highest proof of her delicate affection to the account of coquetry. She is too sensible not to perceive that my passion for her renders me unhappy, and she, though vainly, flatters herself, that time and absence may effect a cure.

THIS she in confidence declared to captain Beaumont, when pressed by him to receive my visits.—Alas ! she little knows I would not change my malady for health ; and yet I will conform to her prescription, and drink the bitter draught without a murmur. O Woodville ! when we truly love, it is our highest transport to obey !

I AM truly concerned for the account you give of lady Woodville, but find a secret consolation for her sufferings in your sensibility ; as I am almost certain that your tenderness properly exerted towards her, will restore both her health and happiness.—I dare not trust myself with a doubt of your conduct upon this occasion.

I THINK nothing can be plainer than her knowledge of your attachment to the marchioness.—Her positive refusal of going to France marks it too strongly. Woodville, I fear—but I will not reproach you—your own generous heart must sting you too severely.

I HAVE this moment received a letter from captain Beaumont.—Madame de Carignon's disorder appears to be the small pox ; and as she is pretty far advanced in her pregnancy, they think her life in danger. What has been gained by making her fly from that disease a few months ago !

BUT I have not time now to moralize. I shall send off a physician immediately, and shall follow him myself in a few hours; my Charlotte must want consolation, and is at the same time, the only person capable of administering it to her unhappy father.

Your's ever,

SEYMOUR.

P. S. I should give you credit for not mentioning the marchioness in your letter, If I had not heard that ladies and lovers generally postponed their most material business to their postscripts. Be that as it may, I can only tell you, the marchioness and her *Caro Sposo* are in this town; but where I know not. Captain Barnard and lady Ransford are also here.

L E T T E R XXXVI.

Lord WOODVILLE to Lord SEYMOUR.

Dear SEYMOUR.

LADY Woodville is much better—Sir John and lady Straffon, lord and lady Mount Willis, have been here this fortnight.—The polite cheerfulness of their society, has I believe been of infinite service to Emily; but I still flatter myself that my attention and tenderness have contributed more to her recovery than any thing else.

I HAVE now the real happiness to think, that every apprehension of her mind is entirely removed; I can therefore, scarcely doubt but that health and peace will return together; for I am but

but too clearly convinced, that the privation of the latter, occasioned the loss of the former.

THERE certainly never was a more amiable creature than lady Woodville—so unassuming in her manners, so fearful of giving pain, that she would if possible, conceal her complaints, even from her domestics who all adore her.

IS it not amazing, Seymour, that perfectly sensible as I am, of her uncommon merits, there should be found a being upon earth, who holds a higher place in my affection? How falsely do they flatter our understanding, who say that esteem is the basis of love! if that were true, I should be the happiest of men, should think no more of the ungrateful Isabella, should no longer feel the reproaches of a wayward heart, which would then be entirely devoted to the charming Emily.

BUT though I may never be able, entirely to eradicate this fatal disease from my mind, I have great pleasure in perceiving, that the constant exertion of my tenderness towards Emily, is attended with the sincerest delight to myself; as it fulfils a duty and flatters my humanity with the idea of conferring happiness upon an amiable and deserving object.

THE practice of any virtue is not so difficult as we are apt to imagine.—There requires nothing more than resolution to commence.—Habit will soon make it easy, if not pleasant, to us.—Yet still must I envy those, who have no need to struggle; and when I behold the ingenuous fondness of lord Mount Willis and Sir John Straffon, to their wives, I curse my fate, and despise my own weakness, for having reduced me to the contemptible necessity of feigning what they are happy enough to feel.

WE are to return the visits of our present guests in our way to Bristol.——Lord Mount Willis has a very fine seat in Somersetshire.——He is a very agreeable accomplished man. His wife before her marriage, loved Sir James Miller——passionately loved him——and yet she has withdrawn her ill-placed fondness and doats upon her lord. Shall I be weaker, weaker than a puny girl? and shall the voice of reason always plead in vain?—I dare not reply to these mortifying queries.

I MOST sincerely pity the unhappy general de Beaumont; his misfortunes have been multiplied on him, at a time when he is least able to encounter them. There is a spring in youth, which makes us capable of resisting almost any pressure; but when a body, which has been nursed in the soft lap of prosperity becomes enfeebled by years, the mind also partakes of its enervation; and we have still less reason to expect a vigorous exertion of the mental powers, than of muscular strength at threescore.

THE wisdom therefore, that is in general attributed to age, arises more from a privation of passion, than from experience or any other cause. As the nerves grow rigid, the heart is insensibly rendered callous. The exquisite sensations both of pain and pleasure, after a certain time of life are imperceptibly blunted, by each returning day; and we at last become solely indebted to memory for informing us, that we were ever capable of feeling the extremes of joy or sorrow.

THE only passion, which nature seems to design should remain in its full force in our declining age, is paternal affection; and as the others subside, I should imagine that gains strength—there is a mixture too of self-love in it, which generally makes its existence equal with our own. The objects

objects of this affection are gradually maturing, under our fostering care; each day they make some advances towards our idea of perfections, a likeness to ourselves; with anxious hopes we watch the tender bud, look with delight upon the opening blossom, and gaze enraptured on the blooming fruit—It is our own, we planted, and we reared it! In this most tender point, then the poor old general is now wounded; his armour and his breast plate thrown aside, the barbed arrow sinks into his heart.

SHOULD madame de Carignon die, which I hope she will not, there are abundance of good christians, who would immediately conclude her death to be a judgment on him, for his inhuman treatment of Charlotte. But I, who confess myself a sinner, have not a doubt of his having already atoned his passive guilt, towards her by his contrition.—You are the single person, who appear to be injured by it,—for I am fully satisfied, that Charlotte is no longer unhappy.

I HAVE philosophized and moralized upon this subject, to the extent of my time and paper, perhaps to prevent my entering again upon another on which I am neither philosopher, nor moralist.—I shall therefore, fly from it by bidding you,

Adieu,

WOODVILLE.

L E T T E R XXXVII.

Lord SEYMOUR, to Lord WOODVILLE.

Dear WOODVILLE,

MADAME de Carignon is recovered, if it can be called a recovery, for a fine young woman to survive her beauty.—That is indeed, absolutely destroyed; but as her husband's fondness seems unabated by the loss, her homeliness may possibly become an advantage, rather than a misfortune.—Few, very few women, or men either have strength of mind sufficient to bear universal admiration; and when that is derived from beauty alone, there is scarce a young person who thinks it necessary to attain any other qualification or accomplishment, that does not tend to the embellishment of their charms.

I HAVE observed through life, that we seldom meet with an agreeable man or woman, who have been remarkably handsome. But perhaps, this may be philosophically accounted for.—As Providence acts by the simplest means, and beauty is alone sufficient to procure the love and admiration of mankind, great qualities would be unnecessary to the purpose, and perhaps bar the original design; for we should be more apt to fear than love *a human being*, that we considered as absolutely perfect.

I THEREFORE think with Milton, that where there 'is bestowed too much of ornament, in outward shew elaborate, the inward's less exact;' which may be a kind of consolation to those, whom nature has dealt her personal favours to, with a scanty hand.

IN

IN the country where I am at present, neither youth or beauty are of much value. The grandmother and grand daughter are pretty much upon the same footing.——What little difference there may be is generally in the dowager's favour; as she may probably be possessed of more knowledge and experience and a better fortune.—No woman is ever young or old at Paris; for the same paint that fills up the furrows of the aged cheek, hides the soft down upon the youthful one.

You see that a word to the wise is enough, and that I have followed your plan of philosophizing, upon different subjects, to avoid recurring to painful ones.——I must however acquaint you, that I am to attend Charlotte to Paris, in three days. She has insisted on my returning to England, as soon as she enters the cloister; and I have consented, on her promising to meet me here next spring, provided the general be then living.

THE poor old man has insisted on captain Beaumont's quitting the army, and taking possession of his fortune, except a small annuity, which he reserves for charitable uses. He has behaved nobly to monsieur and madame de Cargnon, and presented twenty thousand crowns to the convent of St. Anthony, as a reward for their kindnesses to his beloved Charlotte. You would pity him sincerely, if you were to behold his distress at the idea of parting with his favourite child; but

“What are, alas! his woes compared to mine!”

ADIEU, my friend ; if I were capable of joy,
I should feel it for lady Woodville's recovery,
I shall write to you from Paris ; and am
Ever your's,

SEYMOUR.

L E T T E R XXXVIII.

Lord SEYMOUR to Lord WOODVILLE.

Paris.
I HAVE once more bid adieu to my dear Charlotte.—But painful as the hour of separation was, the recollection of what I had formerly endured, from her entrance into the convent, with the fond hope of our re-meeting in a few months, have abated its anguish ; and some very extraordinary accidents, which have happened within these few hours, have taken up my whole attention, and carried me, as it were, out of myself.

THE count de Clerembaut, for whom you know I have a sincere friendship, came to see me yesterday morning.—He told me he was just come from the tennis-court, where there had been a very warm *brouillerie* between two English gentlemen. One of their names, he said, was Ransford, who quitted the field to his antagonist, but with a look and manner, that seemed to say, he was determined to meet him elsewhere.

I WAS alarmed at this account, and immediately ordered my chariot, and drove to the marchioness's. Ransford was not at home.—I came back to my hotel, and wrote to him ; expatiated on the ill consequences of fighting a duel in Paris ; begged him to defer his resentments, till his
opponent,

opponent, whom I understood to be an Englishman, and he should meet in their own country ; but if he should be circumstanced, as to be under a necessity of rejecting my advice, I hoped he would at least accept of my service to attend him to the field, or command me in whatever way he thought proper.

IN about three hours I received the following answer.

To Lord SEYMOUR.

“ My dear LORD,

“ I am truly thankful for your kind attention to me ; but I am at present too far embarked to recede ; and even your admonition must therefore come too late. Let the consequence be what it will, I cannot think of heightening my distress, by involving you in it. But I have a much more material act of friendship to implore from you.—The marchioness will stand in need of your protection.—I need say no more—hasten to her ; the affair will be over, before you receive this. I have the satisfaction to think that captain Barnard deserves his fate if he should fall by my hand, as he has this day added fresh insult to former injury.

Adieu, perhaps for ever,

WILLIAM RANSFORD.”

I INSTANTLY ran, or rather flew to the marchioness, whom I found waiting dinner for Mr. Ransford—She seemed surprized at my entrance, as she had heard that I had been there in the morning.—The anxiety of my countenance became contagious ; and she enquired with the greatest earnestness, if I knew any thing about Mr. Ransford ? before I could reframe a reply, the lieutenant de Police was on the stairs, and I

rushed out of the room to prevent his coming into it. He passed me by and entered.—She did not appear to be alarmed.

IT seems there is a law-suit between her and her late husband's heir, for part of her jointure; and she, I suppose, concluded that he came to execute some order of court relative to that affair. But long before he could fully explain the real motives of his coming, she ceased to hear, and had sunk motionless upon the sofa where she sat.

THE lieutenant and his myrmidons took possession of every thing *au nom du roi*, and assured us that diligent search would be made for the murderer. I intreated him to leave the unhappy lady's apartment to herself, and that I would be answerable for every thing in it. He retired with infinite politeness, which is the best substitute to humanity: and in this country, which abounds with shew and delusion, is frequently mistaken for it.

As the marchioness is five months gone with child, it was thought proper to have her blooded.—Every possible care has been and shall be taken of her. She is distressingly grateful for my small attentions towards her. But a mind subdued by affliction is apt to over-rate every little mark of kindness.

THIS unhappy affair will detain me here for some time longer.—I will not quit the post of guardian to the afflicted fair, till I resign her into Ransford's hands. You shall daily hear from me.

Adieu,

SEYMOUR.

LET-

L E T T E R XXXIX.

Lord SEYMOUR to Lord WOODVILLE.

YESTERDAY passed away in forming melancholy conjectures on the recent cause of quarrel between captain Barnard and Mr. Ransford; in intermediate ideas, whither he would bend his course, and in listening to various reports which were variously repeated by the friends, acquaintance, and servants of the unhappy combatants.

WE had however the satisfaction to discover, that Ransford had made some provision for his escape, as he had converted above three hundred pounds into post bills the morning of the duel, and had ordered a Swiss servant who has lived with him for five years, and is remarkably attached to him, to attend at a particular place with a couple of the fleetest horses he could hire, or purchase. From hence I conclude he will travel to Switzerland, and take up his abode at Berne, till he can return with honour and safety into England.

You will perhaps say why at that particular place more than any other? I grant the idea is formed upon a vague conjecture; but Andre was born at Berne, and the Swiss are of all nations, the Scotch not excepted, the most smitten with the love of their country. Ransford's mind must be unhinged by this sad accident, torn from its props, and ready to recline itself on the first friendly stay that will support it. The honest Swiss looks back with transport on those barren hills where first his mind found joy, his body strength; and leads his master there to share

share the gifts which he received from nature, and the soil. I say he will not stop till he arrives at Berne.

THE marchioness does not agree with my opinion; she thinks Brussels, Holland, Italy, nay England, more agreeable. That is, she could like to fix her residence, in any of those places, rather than at Berne.—They are all equal to me, except England, where I am pretty sure he will not go.

THERE were too sealed letters found in captain Barnard's pocket, the one addressed to lady Ransford, the other to the man who killed him. I will wait upon her ladyship to-morrow to obtain the latter; it must certainly throw some extraordinary light upon the affair.

I HAD written so far when I received a summons from the marchioness to attend instantly. A thousand apprehensions crowded on my mind; I feared Ransford might not have escaped, and I knew the vindictive spirit of his step mother too well to hope that she would not prosecute. I found the marchioness in a state little short of madness—her expressions were such as made me rather fear than feel—her eyes darted fire, and she traversed the circumference of her dressing room, with the air and pace of distraction: she seemed to be unfixed.

WHERE is he, madam? said I. Let me fly to him and try what gold can do, to purchase his enlargement. This must be our only resource; let them take it all, said she, but let me go—a *lettre de cachet*! no monarch, nor no minister dare sign it—I will fly to Versailles—it is already granted, and you see me a prisoner at this moment—dare you rescue me?

AMAZEMENT took away the power of speech: I did not understand her, it was impossible I should.

should.—At that instant, a person of a very gentleman like and engaging appearance, entered the chamber.—He seemed to be astonished at her beauty, and perturbation, and gazed, for an instant, first at her, and then at me—at last seeming to recollect himself, he addressed me in the following words.

I AM sorry your indiscretion has permitted our meeting, Sir—It is true I have received no particular information against you ; you are, therefore, at liberty to depart ; which I beg you will do instantly, as you cannot be safe in this house a single moment.

I IMMEDIATELY perceived he had mistaken me for Mr. Ransford, and readily accepting all the good will he had shewn to my friend's unhappy situation, returned him thanks for his intended humanity, and assured him of my gratitude, for a favour, which I did not stand in need of. He blushed at his mistake, and said that he had been twelve years in office, and had never exceeded his commission, but in that way. Strange, that a man should blush, that had been twelve years in such an office ?

HE then explained his business.—He had a *lettre de cachet* against madame, which the marquis de St. Aumont, her husband's nephew, had obtained, to prevent her quitting the kingdom, till the suit between them should be determined.

HER rage is not to be described ; she accused the laws of injustice, and its officers of insolence, and cruelty. Asked to what prison a peeress should be led, and whether she was to be handcuffed like a malefactor ? to all this intemperate language, the officer replied with great calmness, that her ladyship might put an end to her distress, by giving security to the court for her stay in Paris. She told him she would not stay for all the

the courts in Europe. He then said something in a low voice, about her being confined.

SHE had sent for her lawyer, who arrived critically, and prevailed on her, at last, to pass her word jointly with us, that she would not quit Paris, without leave of the court, which he said he would apply for the next day.

THE agitation of her spirits now subsiding, she fell into violent passions of tears; bewailed her fate, and said she was the most wretched of human beings. I fear she has more reason to think so than she is yet acquainted with. For after she withdrew to her chamber, her lawyer, at my request, explained the nature of the process against her, and assured me that the late marquis de St. Aumont, had no power over those lands, which he settled on her for a jointure; that he was, therefore, very glad to find she was married to an English gentleman of fortune, as he had great reason to believe the cause would go against her.—That he feared she was extremely in debt, and that all her personalities were already forfeited to the crown, as being the supposed property of Mr. Ransford. What a scene of distress, Woodville! and what will become of this unhappy pair?

BEFORE I left the house, the marchioness sent for her lawyer into her chamber.—I took that opportunity of retiring to write to you, and shall now close this melancholy narrative with wishing you good night.

L E T T E R XL.

Lord SEYMOUR to Lord WOODVILLE.

Dear WOODVILLE,

BOTH my mind and my body are so extremely harraßed, that I am scarce able to give you
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an account of the distresses in which I am involved.

JUST as I had sealed my last letter to you, I received a billet from captain Beaumont, to inform me, that the general and he were that moment arrived in Paris, and that their coming was occasioned by a very alarming account they had received of my ever-dear Charlotte's being extremely indisposed.

I FLEW directly to the general's house, and found the poor old man sinking under the double weight of years and sorrow. He shewed me the abbess's letter to him, which said, "that from the time of Charlotte's return into the convent, a fever had preyed upon her spirits; that she had concealed her illness for several days, and even made light of it when it was too visible; that she was now reduced to such a state of weakness, that the physicians had declared medicine could be of no use to her, and that an immediate change of air was the only chance she had for life."

No words can express what I felt on reading this sad letter; yet will I candidly confess, that her father's anguish seemed to surpass even mine. He called himself her murderer! and said if she should die, he never could have hopes of mercy or salvation.—Alas! am I not guilty as himself! My fatal rashness made her take those vows, which her fond love for me, in any other case, would have rejected

THE general determined to remove Charlotte out of the convent the next day, and convey her as far out of Paris as her strength would permit. He intreated me to accompany them, in their melancholy and slow progress to Bellevue. Judge of my distress, at being obliged to refuse! But my honour was passed to a wretch who has none—
the

the marchioness—Captain Beaumont promised to bring me a faithful account of his sister's situation in the morning, and I retired home—not to rest.

CAPTAIN Beaumont was punctual to his word; he came to me before eight o'clock, and told me that his father and he had seen Charlotte, and found her in a very weak state; that she had consented to set out with them for Belleveüe, but that he did not believe they should be able to carry her farther than three or four leagues that day, and intreated me to go with them. I readily consented, and determined that I would return to Paris that night, as soon as ever Charlotte should retire to bed.

THE captain and I agreed to meet, at the general's house, at eleven o'clock, to follow our fair fugitive, who was to set out with her father from the convent. He told me that Charlotte had made a thousand tender inquiries, about my health; that she rejoiced at my being still in Paris, and seemed delighted at the thought of seeing me that day. I needed not these new proofs of her regard to increase my ardour for her; my soul was on the wing to meet her, yet still the claims of friendship were not unheard.

I RESOLVED to go immediately to lady Ransford, for the letter that was addressed to her step-son, and found in Barnard's pocket. Then to wait on *the marchioness*, and make my excuse for absenting myself from her the remainder of that day: but though *she* had left Paris, it was fated, that I should not quit it for some time.

As I was coming out of my apartment, I was met by the lieutenant de police, who arrested me as an accomplice with the marchioness, in having defrauded

defrauded his majesty, by conveying away her most valuable effects, which were confiscated to his use, and having fled herself, though under an *arret*.—Never was astonishment greater than mine.

IN vain I pleaded ignorance of the fact, or the innocence of my intentions, or offered to give ample security for those effects, which had been secreted by that mean, that worthless woman! The officer told me he was not quite such an idiot, as the person who had taken my word before, and that no argument I could urge, would have the least weight with him.

As the last and most prevailing rhetoric I offered him my purse, if he would go with me to general Beaumont's, and take his bail for my appearance the next day; but he withstood my gold, and even refused to let me return into my apartment, to write an apology for not attending my beloved Charlotte.

THIS was the first time, I had ever felt "the insolence of office."—I submitted to it, though reluctantly, and was immediately conveyed to the Chatelet.—I sent off a servant to captain Beaumont, to desire him to come to me; but as soon as I was lodged in prison, I was informed that no person would be admitted to see me, as they considered me as a delinquent of state.

I THEN demanded to be confronted with my accusers, and brought before a judge. They smiled at my ignorance, and told me, that as I was not in England I must submit to their laws, which were not quite so expeditious as ours, and that patience would be my best resource for the present.

THOUGH my temper is naturally gentle, and my passions have been long subdued by affliction,
it

it was with difficulty I could command my rage—yet on whom should I vent it? on wretches brazed by custom to the wild ravings of resentment, or the soft plaints of sorrow!

As soon as I was capable of reasoning with myself, I considered that a consciousness of my own integrity ought to support me under the disagreeable circumstances I was involved in by another's fault; and am certain it would have done so, had I not been disappointed of the painful pleasure of seeing the lovely, languid Charlotte! I lamented the uneasiness which she must feel from hearing of my confinement, unknowing of the cause; and the apprehension of her thinking me guilty of some criminal action, and her suffering from that thought, almost distracted me. I cursed the marchioness a thousand times.——Yes, Woodville, from my heart I cursed her. Bane of your happiness! disturber now of mine!

WHEN I grew a little calm, I desired to see the keeper of the prison, as I wanted to know whither I was at liberty to write to the English ambassador, who I knew was then at Versailles and to the rest of my friends. The governor du Chatelet, was immediately announced, and on his entering, my eye was struck with the most graceful figure and engaging countenance, I had ever seen. He seemed to be turned of fifty, but had such a softness of features and complexion, as is rarely to be met with but in extreme youth. His appearance filled me with surprize; I was amazed that such a man should be capable of such an office, which I supposed could not only be suited to the most insensible or brutal natures.

His conversation was as pleasing as his person; he readily assented to my request, and said he would take care that my letters should be delivered.

livered. He then gave orders that my own servants should be permitted to attend me, and that any person whom I desired to see, should be immediately admitted. I thanked him for his humanity, in removing every unnecessary restraint, and assured him I should make no other use of his indulgence, than that of endeavouring to procure my liberty, by the most legal means.

He increased my astonishment, by replying to me, in English, that he could not have any doubts of lord Seymour's honour; and that he hoped I would do him and his family the favour to dine with them, and allow them as much of my company as was convenient to me, while I remained in the Chatelet.

My curiosity to know something more of his family, made me accept his invitation; though heaven knows how little inclined to mix with strangers, or enter into any plan of dissipation. I have written to the ambassador and to my dear Charlotte. By removing her anxiety I have lessened my own.

I AM not apprehensive that my confinement can last many hours; I will therefore endeavour to keep up my spirits, with the fond hopes of flying to my Charlotte, the moment I am released. In the mean time, I attend the governor's summons to dinner, and for the present bid my dear Woodville

Adieu.

Your's.

SEYMOUR.

P. S. What is the reason that I do not hear from you? whilst at liberty, I regretted, but in my confinement shall lament your silence. My affectionate compliments to lady Woodville.

LET-

L E T T E R XLI.

Lord Seymour to Lady STRAFFON *to Lady* WOODVILLE.

“ Hope travels thro’, nor quits us till we die.”

AND without that charming companion, I think I should not now survive to tell my dear Woodville, that I am just released from a confinement of fifteen tedious days. But let me be methodical in my relation.—No, it is impossible! my chariot waits to carry me to Bellevue, to my adored Charlotte! Se is better. I am happy, and most sincerely Your’s

SEYMOUR.

L E T T E R XLII.

Lord SEYMOUR *to* *Lord* WOODVILLE.

Belleveüe.

CHARLOTTE recovers daily; my fears for her precious life are abated. Your silence now alarms me.—Why, must I never be free from apprehensions, for those I truly love? But I will, for the present, indulge your impatience, and restrain my own.

ON the first day of my confinement, I was shewn into the governor’s apartment, which was elegantly furnished, and received by him and his lady, with the utmost politeness. She was surrounded by five beautiful children the eldest a girl about sixteen. I will confess it, Woodville! my eyes were insensibly rivetted to this young creature’s lovely form; and for the first
time

time of my life, *my heart* received a delight, from gazing on the charms of another woman, besides Charlotte !

I DID not long indulge the dangerous pleasure, without calling *the wanderer* to account, and soon perceived that the fair Maria's chief attraction was owing to her remarkable likeness to my Charlotte. This observation quieted my scruples and left me the innocent satisfaction of admiring her beauty, with a brother's eye. Yet still my curiosity was increased by the resemblance ; and as soon as I was left alone with the governor, I took the liberty of asking him if he was related to general Beaumont ?

HE answered no ; but said his wife was sister to the late madame de Beaumont, though much unlike her both in mind and person ; that he could well allow madame D'Angueville inferior in respect of beauty, but that her understanding and heart were fraught with every charm and virtue, that could adorn a woman.

I ASKED him had he never seen his niece Charlotte Beaumont ? he answered with an honest warmth, yes, Sir, when it was too late to make her happy, or reward your merit—would to heaven I had known her sooner ! I bowed and thanked him, even for fruitless wishes, and for a time forgot my being a prisoner, from the delight I felt at being with one who knew and loved my Charlotte.

WE became totally unreserved ; and the governor informed me, that he was of the N— family, descended from one of those infatuated men, who had sacrificed their fortunes, and renounced their country to serve a weak and worthless prince, who had neither inclination or power to reward their attachment.

HE

HE told me that his father had died of a broken heart, while he was but a child; that his friends had with difficulty obtained him a commission in the Irish brigade, where he had served above twenty years without arriving to the rank of captain; and that he might have still remained in that situation, but that general Beaumont, by his interest, had procured him the post he then enjoyed, when he and his family had been reduced to the greatest distress.

THAT he hoped he had acquitted himself in his office, with humanity and compassion; and by many circumstances which he related convinced me, that none but a person of a noble and generous nature, was fit to preside over the number of unfortunates, that guilt or accident impels to that gloomy mansion. Sad reflection! that those who are fittest for the charge, are most averse to accept, and least thought of for the office.

ABOUT seven o'clock in the evening, captain Beaumont inquired for me, and was immediately admitted. His uncle monsieur D'Angueville, had never seen him before.—They were mutually charmed with each other. The captain told me, that as soon as my servant acquainted him with my situation, he wrote a line to the general, to inform him of it, and set out on the instant for Versailles; that he had seen the English ambassador, who promised to wait on monsieur le duc de N——, the premier minister, next morning, and obtain my release as soon as possible.

I THANKED my generous friend for his kind attention to my interests, and passed the evening with tolerable cheerfulness. The next day, about noon, I received a visit from Mr. S—— secretary to our ambassador. He told me that his excellency had been with the minister, and
desired

desired that I might be set at liberty immediately. That the duc de N—— had informed him it was impossible to comply with his request, as there was a criminal process instituted against me for aiding and abetting the marchioness de St. Aumont, in open violation of the laws; and the only favour that could be indulged me, was the allowing me counsel, and bringing the affair to a trial with the utmost expedition.

I ENDEAVOURED to make a virtue of necessity, and affected to appear contented with the very small favour that his excellency had obtained for me. But not to make the repetition of my confinement as tedious to you as the time was to me, the day of trial came, and by the joint testimony of the marchioness's lawyer, her servants, and my own, I was acquitted of being concerned in her escape, but obliged to give bail for four thousand pounds, which is the value set upon the jewels, plate, &c. which she either carried off, or secreted.

THUS have I been injured, in my honour, person, and property, by my humane attention to that most worthless of humankind. But no matter; and if the meanness of her conduct towards me sets her in the light, in which I wish you to behold her, I shall think myself overpaid, for every injury I have sustained on her account.

THE moment I recovered my liberty I waited on the ambassador, who had come to Paris, on purpose to know if he could be any way serviceable to me. I made my acknowledgments to him, and set out that evening with my dear and indefatigable friend, captain Beaumont, for the loved place where my heart's treasure lay. I have already told you that I had the happiness of finding her much better; and the joy which
she

she felt at seeing her brother and me, has, I flatter myself, contributed to her recovery.

THE marchioness's lawyer told me, he had received a letter from her, dated at Brussels, wherein she exulted at her own cleverness, in getting out of the power of the laws, and gave some dark hints, of her not being married to Ransford. Heaven grant that this may be true! The suit with her husband's nephew will go against her; and for her contempt of the arrest she will be outlawed, and her whole fortune confiscated;—so that if, as I hope, she is not Ransford's wife, she may possibly be reduced to her original poverty, and meet the contempt due to her vices from all mankind.

THIS is the fifth letter I have written to you without receiving a line from you. I have certainly reason to apprehend that some fatal accident has occasioned your silence, for I can never doubt the sincerity of your attachment to yours
Most truly,

SEYMOUR.

L E T T E R XLIII.

Lady WOODVILLE to Lady STRAFFON.

PITY me! pray for me, my dearest sister! for heaven but mocks my prayers! had they been heard, lord Woodville's life had never been in danger. I am distracted, Fanny! I would that I were. Though anguish such as mine strains every sense, and racks my tortured brain, it will not crack! no, I am still awake to all the miseries a wretch can feel, who doats and who despairs!

ON

ON Tuesday se'nnight, fatal day ! my lord received a letter from lord Seymour while I was present. I observed that he was strongly agitated while he read it, even to a change of countenance and colour. I thought there must be some extraordinary cause for his emotion, which perhaps he wished to conceal from me ; I therefore rose softly from my seat and attempted to retire.

O FANNY ! can I ever forget the look of sorrow which he wore, when taking me by the hand he said, you must not leave me, Emily ! but share a painful office with your lord.—You must endeavour to console poor lady Harriet for Barnard's death ; Ransford has killed him, and is fled from Paris.

HE then turned quick away, as if to hide his grief. It could not be for Barnard that he wept ; and Ransford, he as well as I, believed he was safe.—O there is another cause ! let me not think of it, lest it divide my tears, which should all flow for him, and not for my worthless self.

HE told me he would go directly to Sir Harry Ransford, to acquaint him with his son's misfortune, and as he could not do it abruptly, said it was possible he might stay to dinner there, and begged I would take the most immediate opportunity of informing lady Harriet of this unhappy affair. His horses were immediately ordered, and he rode off.

I SENT for Fanny Weston to assist me in the painful task I had undertaken. But why do I waste a moment in thinking of any object upon earth but one ? About two hours after my lord left Woodfort, one of the servants who had attended him galloped into the court yard, ordered the chariot to be got ready instantly, and bid

my woman tell me that my lord had fallen from his horse and much hurt.

I WAS sitting in lady Harriet's dressing room when the sound of the chariot passing hastily under the window alarmed me.—I rang to know the cause, when a servant pale as death, told me that my lord had met with a sad accident. I cried where is he ? and rushed out of the room. I was met by my woman on the stairs. Lady Harriet, Fanny Weston, and she, prevented my running into the high-way ; they poured drops and water down my throat. I knew not what they did or said to me.

AN express was sent off for a surgeon, who arrived in less than half an hour after my lord was brought home senseless. They would not suffer me to see him till he had been bled and his wounds dressed.—But gracious heaven, when I beheld him !

LET me try to banish the sad idea.—Alas ! I fear it will never be effaced ! never, my sister, never, unless I live to see his natural form restored to my fond wishes, and my ardent prayers ! —Oh, join with me, my Fanny ! in earnest supplication for his precious life !

THE humane, the tender-hearted surgeon, said every thing that could amuse, but not dispel my fears. That his wounds, though dangerous in his poor judgment were not mortal ; but that he wished for better help than his own.

AN express was dispatched for Middleton or Ranby.

I CANNOT, but I would not if I could describe the night I passed—my lord remained quite senseless ; enviable state ! yet now and then his languid eyes fixed on me. About five in the morning he fell into a kind of a dose, and remained in that situation till near seven, when he
awoke

awoke in the most violent delirium—he raved incessantly—but not of me.

IN this most melancholy state he has continued eleven days——“a burning fever, and a broken heart!” O Fanny, it is too much! but should he recover it I never shall.

MR. Ranby and the surgeon who first attended my dear lord, have both assured me that the hurt which he received from his fall, could not endanger his life. But neither they nor the Physicians who visit him daily, can pretend to say what turn his fever will take. Strong opiates have been given, and at length have taken effect; he sleeps, my Fanny! while I who have never closed my eyes since the sad accident, indulge them now in their once pleasing task of writing to my friend, my more than sister! grief weighs my eye-lids down, but not with the soft pressure of an healthful slumber.

Adieu, adieu, my dear Fanny!

E. WOODVILLE.

L E T T E R XLIV.

Lady STRAFFON to Lady WOODVILLE.

LET not my dearest Emily condemn her sincerely affectionate and afflicted Fanny, for not having instantly replied in person to her most affecting letter.

O, my Emily! my child! my sister! how does my heart bleed for you! tears dim my sight, and yet perhaps your eyes are dry! the burning balls fixed on your dying lord! would you could weep as I do.

As my spirits have been rather weak and lan-

guid since my lying in, even while I was at Woodfort, lady Mount Willis, whose attention and tenderness to me is without bounds, prevailed upon Sir John and me to pass a few weeks with her, at a house which my lord has hired near Windsor, while his family seat is repairing. The old topics of change of air, and moderate exercise were exhausted, both by Sir John and her, before I would consent.

At length I most reluctantly complied. I knew not then why I should feel reluctance; but I now begin to think with you, that our presages should be listened to.—Would I had hearkened then to mine! I should now be with my dearest Emily, and by sharing her anguish and fatigue, perhaps, in some degree, might lessen both—but we now must feel the sad addition to our present miseries, of knowing that each other is unhappy.

ABOUT two hours before the post brought your letter to Windsor, lord Mount Willis and Sir John set out for his lordship's in Oxfordshire; and while Lucy and I were sitting at breakfast after they were gone, we heard a violent scream—I knew the voice to be my little Emily's—I ran up stairs to her chamber, without recollecting that she had been some time dressed, and playing with the house keeper's daughter, a child of her own age, in the garden.

LADY Mount Willis followed the sound, and found my poor little angel lying on the ground with her leg broken, the only words she spoke were “Do not let my mama be frightened,” and fainted quite away.

In this condition she was brought into the house; I will not attempt to describe mine. Your situation is by far more dreadful, yet sure it was a scene of deep distress. Suffice it now to say that the moment she is out of danger, I will

will fly to share or alleviate my dearest Emily's affliction. The fond, the tender claims of child and sister, now divide my heart—it almost breaks that I must say

Adieu,

F. STRAFFON.

L E T T E R XLV.

Lady WOODVILLE to Lady STRAFFON.

My dearest FANNY,

THIS is the one and twentieth day of my lord's illness; and on this day, be it for ever blest by me! the physicians have observed a change in his disorder, attended with many favourable symptoms that gave hopes of life. He lay for many days in a state of insensibility, had ceased to rave, and hardly moved his limbs.

At eleven o'clock this morning he sighed extremely; O Fanny! those sad sighs too long have pierced my heart! then seemed to wake as from a trance. The first object he took notice of was me, and with a languid voice he said, my Emily, have you sat up all night? O go to bed, my love. Then closed his eyes and fell into a little slumber.

I COULD not answer him, tears came to my relief and drowned my utterance. Yes, Fanny, I have wept most bitterly, and my poor heart is much relieved. Doctor Fenton insists on bleeding me immediately. I know he thinks that I have caught the fever from my lord; blessed contagion; may it not, Fanny, lighten his disease? would I not die to lessen or remove his heart-felt pains! but I much fear that even my death would not now heal his griefs. —She is another's: and never can be his.

—I fear I rave, my thoughts are wild ; I do not wish that you should comprehend them.

YOUR poor, dear Emily ! I hope she will recover.—A broken limb is dreadful ! but a broken heart worse ! 'They snatch away the pen. Well ! well ! I will be blooded. Aye, and I will go to bed ; my limbs no longer can support my weight.

Farewell, my Fanny.

E.-W.

L E T T E R XLVI.

Miss WESTON to Lady STRAFFON.

My dear Lady STRAFFON.

I KNOW not how to acquaint you with the additional misfortune that is fallen upon us all. Our dear lady Woodville lies dangerously ill of a fever. My heart almost breaks while I tell you, that the physicians have but little hopes of her life. During the first one-and-twenty days of her lord's illness, she never left his chamber, nor could even be prevailed upon to rest herself, except for a few minutes, when quite exhausted on a couch.

WHAT surprized lady Harriet and me most was, that she never shed a tear, till lord Woodville first recovered his reason and spoke to her. The servants who attended in his chamber have told me, that while he remained insensible, she used frequently to lay her cheek upon the pillow, and kiss his poor parched lips, as if she wished to catch the fever from him. O, madam ! why were you not here to save her precious life ?

LADY Harriet and I have been so much used to look up to her with respect, as well as love
(and

(and sure no human being ever deserved them more) that we could not attempt to oppose her resolution, farther than by fruitless intreaties, though we knew it must be hurtful to herself. Lady Lawson was unfortunately gone upon a visit, into Lincolnshire, two days before my lord Woodville's accident, she returned yesterday, and is almost distracted at lady Woodville's illness. But what is her's, or any other person's grief to what my lord endures? no words can describe his sorrow; and I am convinced, if she should die, he never will recover.

He insisted upon being taken out of bed this day, and carried to her chamber. Doctor Fenton finding him peremptory, consented though reluctantly. Good God! what a pale and emaciated figure! Lady Woodville at first did not know him: but when he spoke to her, she started up, clasped her arms round his neck, and cried out with unnatural strength! My dearest lord! this, this is kind! she shall not part us now! yes, we will go together; indeed I will not stay for any thing on earth; no not for *little Harry*.

Her spirits became quite exhausted at these words, and she sunk down in a flood of tears. We thought lord Woodville would have expired on the instant. He fainted, and was carried back to his chamber in that situation. This was the first time that lady Woodville had mentioned her *child* since my lord's illness.

THE Doctor thinks it a good symptom, and would have the little cherubim brought into her sight—but who can answer for the consequence if he should catch the fever from her. At this moment, she sleeps, and lady Lawson is determined to make the experiment, as soon she awakes.—God grant it may succeed.

I HOPE my little cousin has got the better of her sad accident, and that I shall not hear from, but see you as soon as possible. I send this by a special messenger, and shall write every day till you come. I am, dear lady Straffon,

Your afflicted and affectionate,
F. WESTON.

L E T T E R XLVII.

Lady STRAFFON to Miss WESTON.

O FANNY! humbled in the dust by the Almighty's chastening hand, I strive in vain, to bow my heart to his all-wise decrees, and bless the arrow that inflicts the wound!

How have I vainly vaunted my own fortitude, and thought it proof against the severest trials! Perhaps it is to shew me my own weakness, that my loved sister and my child are doomed to suffer.—I fear there is impiety in that thought. Gracious heaven, look down on my distraction! The first, the tenderest object of my youthful fondness, my Emily! my sister! given to my care by a much honoured and a dying parent—for her I felt a mother's tenderness, a sister's love! Why were the ties thus doubly twined around my sad heart, if they must thus be broken! My daughter too, child of my wedded love! dear to me for her father's sake, as for my own.—Both! both, my Emilys at once! Sure I may dare to say, the infliction is severe!

NOTHING can be more alarming than your account of my dear sister's situation; I would fly to her this moment, but that my poor little girl

girl is also in a fever—my heart is torn to pieces for the two dear sufferers; nor does lord Woodville want his share of my compassion.—I will still look up to the throne of mercy, and hope for the recovery of these dear, dear friends! Write to me, Fanny, every hour if possible: and, O! may your next bring comfort to

the truly afflicted,

F. STRAFFON.

L E T T E R XLVIII.

Miss WESTON to Lady STRAFFON.

Dear Madam,

A RAY of consolation beams upon us: lady Woodville's fever is abated; she raves no more. The disorder seems now to have fallen upon her nerves; and her extreme weakness is, at present the principal source of our apprehensions for her. When she awoke out of the slumber she was in, during my last letter, her recollection returned; she knew lady Lawson, and every person near her; but seemed particularly anxious to remember, what she had said to her lord; and expressed great uneasiness at doctor Fenton's having suffered him to run the hazard of leaving his chamber.

LADY Lawson never quits her bed-side; and lady Harriet, who seems to have forgotten all her own distresses, hardly ever leaves my lord—I am a sort of courier between both; and by flattering each in my accounts of the other, hope

F 5

to

to forward both their recoveries. My lord expresses the strongest impatience to see lady Woodville : doctor Fenton will not consent to their meeting for some days, nor even suffer my lord's letters to be delivered to him. I am called to receive a visitor—who can it be at this improper time ?

WHAT a flutter am I in ? You would never guess who this guest was—Sir James Thornton ! but so altered as I never saw any creature ! I began to fear he was married ; though what is it to me if he were ? He has been poring his eyes out at Geneva ever since he left us ; and looks as grave and as wise as an old professor of philosophy.

Do not be angry with me for trifling a little, my dear lady Straffon. I confess I was very glad to see him, and as lord and lady Woodville have had each of them a tolerable night, I think I may be allowed this small indulgence. I have a presentiment too, that my cousin Emily is better.—In short, every thing seems to wear a more cheerful aspect than it did yesterday.

POOR Thornton was so much affected at his friend's illness that the tears stood in his eyes, and he offered up an ejaculation for their recovery, with almost as much devotion as your ladyship could, though he is just come from a place where they say religion is not much in fashion : but he is the best natured creature breathing, and I am sure he prayed from his heart.

HE told me that a vexatious law-suit had brought him to England, and that he meant to have returned to Geneva without seeing lord Woodville or any of his friends ; but being informed of the situation of this family, he had come from London on purpose to make the most minute enquiries.

HE

HE begged I would not let lord or lady Woodville know that he had been here; said he would stay a couple of days at Sir William Lawson's, in hopes of hearing they were out of danger, then return to town to pursue his law-suit, and as soon as that was over he would go back to Geneva—but I shall use my best crow-quill, to try to persuade him to visit Woodfort once more, before he crosses the sea again; and if I succeed in that, I may perhaps try a little farther.

THIS is the last express that I shall send, as I hope by next post, to be able to give you a still more satisfactory account of our dear, dear friends. Lady Woodville is very anxious about her niece.—I tell her, I hope with truth, that the sweet little Emily is much better. I intreat you to confirm my assertion in your next; and to believe me,

Most affectionately your's,

F. WESTON.

L E T T E R XLIX.

Lady STRAFFON to Miss WESTON.

Dear FANNY,

THE manner more than the matter of your last letter, has been a cordial to my heart. You could not surely write in such a cheerful strain, if our dear lady Woodville was in danger; and yet your account is by no means satisfactory; except where you say that her reason is returned, and that she had a good night—your thoughts were diverted to another object, and your letter is confused. Pray be more explicit in your next.

I AM

I AM very happy to be able to confirm your assertion, in favour of my child.—She is I thank God much better, though still in a dangerous state, as the bone of her leg knits slowly, and she suffers much, but though I may not be able to learn fortitude from her example, I have at least acquired humanity, from seeing that a natural mildness of disposition can better enable us to support the accidental miseries of this life than all our boasted reason and philosophy.

I AM ashamed of the intemperate lamentations I made use of in my last letter; and I intreat you to burn it, if you have not already done so.

I SHALL continue to offer up my fervent prayers and wishes for the recovery of my dear sister and her lord; and am, dear Fanny,

Sincerely your's,

F. STRAFFON.

L E T T E R L.

Miss WESTON to Lady STRAFFON.

UPON my word, my dear lady Straffon, if I had not very good news to send you, and was not very good natured, I do not think I should write to you—how you huff one, for being glad to see an old acquaintance. If I did not know that your ladyship is married, I should have thought your last letter had been written by an old maid: but I am so overjoyed, at being able to tell you that lady Woodville is infinitely better, that I cannot keep up my resentment against you any longer.

YES, I am sincerely glad too, that the little Emily has verified my prediction, and recovers daily.

daily.—Now, do not expect me to be methodical, for I will never be so; no, nor will I burn the letter you desire, for I really do not think there is any thing in it, that you need be ashamed of.

OUR affections are not given us intirely for our amusement; they were certainly designed to make us feel our mutual dependence upon each other, and the total insufficiency of individuals to create their own happiness. They are the links which form society; and though, by being stretched or broken they may give us pain, I am certain that we could have no pleasure without them.

I THINK I have got off of this subject very well, considering that this is my first *coup d'essai*, in the moralizing strain.—Now for particulars—Lady Woodville sat up two hours this day—She looks weak and languid, but is, I really think, more beautiful than ever.

MY lord wrote her a few lines, which I had the honour of presenting to her; she seemed transported with them, but, cruel as she is, she did not let any body see them. The doctor would not permit her answering them till to-morrow.—If she sends her letter by me, I shall be mightily tempted to peep—but I will not—for I should not like to be served so myself; and I think that is the best way of determining all doubtful matters.

I SAW Sir James Thornton again, last night—You see I mention him last, that you may not say he has diverted my thoughts from more interesting subjects. He persists in not having his visits announced to lord or lady Woodville. I have promised to keep his secret, and write to him every post, till they are quite recovered,
I shall

I shall begin my correspondence this night ;
therefore,

Adieu, my dear lady Straffon.

F. WESTON.

L E T T E R L I.

Miss WESTON to Lady STRAFFON.

ENCORE, my dear lady Straffon ! do not you really think me very good natured ? but this is now the house of joy ; and we, poor things, who have no character of our own, camelion like, catch the hue of our next neighbour. —No letter from you by last post—but no matter. I have a little familiar, who tells me that Emily is better—thank you, good spirit, for the pleasing news—and now let me tell you, that lady Woodville is so much recovered, that doctor Fenton is to leave us to-morrow.

I THINK I shall be sorry when he goes ; he is a pure chatty man, and I have some reason to imagine, that he likes me vastly. Whenever I happen to be sick, I will certainly send for him.

WELL ! matrimony is a fine thing, to be sure ! and it is very hard, that I, who am so well inclined to enter into that holy state, cannot find an help-mate, meet for me. Though I have my doubts, whether there be many such husbands as lord Woodville. I declare he appears to be infinitely more in love with his wife, than he ever was. Such tender attention, such unaffected fondness, I never beheld—He is never out of her chamber, but when he is obliged to leave her

to

to her repose, which seems now, to be perfectly uninterrupted.

SIR James Thornton is a better correspondent than your ladyship.— I received a letter from him, in answer to mine, with some very pretty compliments interspersed through it, upon my easy manner of writing. Travelling, I find, has improved him; for I do not recollect that he ever said a civil thing to me before he went abroad. *Better late than never*, is a good proverb. Poor lady Harriet! her spirits are very low, though she has behaved surprizingly well on Barnard's death; but I fear her calmness, on that occasion, was owing to the alarming situation of lord and lady Woodville; and that her grief will return with their health. I wish she would think of marrying, a good husband would make her forget Barnard. Dear, good Thornton! another letter from him, and more flattery! *quelle douceur! quel charme!* Adieu, my dear lady Straffon, I must indulge my vanity, this very moment, by shewing his epistle to lord and lady Woodville. Your's, ever.

F. WESTON.

L E T T E R LII.

Lady STRAFFON to Miss WESTON.

THANK you, my good Fanny, for your two lively letters—they have been of infinite use to my poor weak spirits; and though I may not be able to compliment as agreeably as Sir James Thornton, I will venture to say that I am as well pleased as he, with the ease and cheerfulness of your writing. I hope my heart is
truly

truly grateful to the Almighty, for the recovery of my dear sister, and her lord, as well as for the restoration of my little Emily, whom we now think past danger.

You say, very justly, that “our affections” were not given us for amusement.” No, Fanny! they were meant to humble the proud heart; to shew us our own weakness and fallibility, by our frequently bestowing them on unworthy or improper objects; and even when directed by nature, and reason, into their right course, to all the tender charities of life, they should remind us of our intire dependence, on the great Author of our being, by making us sensible that the most delightful attachments, which can be formed, by love or friendship, serve but to enlarge our vulnerary part, and encrease our capacity of feeling pain.

You, perhaps, may think this moral too severe, but it is not meant to restrain us from the indulgence of those fond sensations, which are natural to every good heart, but to raise our gratitude, to the great Giver of all our blessings, and to remind us, that we hold them, by grant, from his bounty, and not from any right, or merit of our own.

As my Emily gains strength every day, we purpose going into Essex, in a short time; and as soon as Sir John can settle some necessary affairs there, we shall all set out for Bristol in hopes of meeting lord and lady Woodville there.—What a joyful meeting will it be to me! my eyes run over at the delightful idea.

THOUGH lady Mount Willis took every precaution to conceal her generosity to Sir James Miller from himself, the unhappy man has discovered that he is indebted to her for his subsistence, and has written her a most affecting letter, acknowledging

acknowledging his own unworthiness, and intreating her to withdraw her bounty, as he declares he could better support the most abject poverty, than the receiving of favours from one, whom he had so highly injured and offended. There is something in this sentiment that inclines me to forgive, even his former baseness, and to pity his present misery. Sure there can be nothing so truly humiliating as receiving obligations from those we have wronged.

I SINCERELY wish that your epistolary correspondence with Sir James Thornton may answer all your expectation.—But, remember, Fanny, that flattery costs men nothing; and that women are apt to over-rate it, and frequently bestow their love and esteem in exchange for what has no intrinsic worth. I grant that in the general commerce of the world, the person whose politeness and attention are most marked to us, deservedly obtains a preference in our regard: vanity is in some degree inherent to all human kind, and the being rated above our fellows, is a species of flattery, which the most delicate creature in the world is never offended at. But in a particular intercourse between man and woman, we should take great care, that our own self-love does not impose upon us, and magnify the common forms or expressions of politeness into a particular address.—Do not be angry at this hint, Fanny, as it is only meant to save your vanity, for I hope your heart is not yet concerned, from the mortification of a disappointment.

Tell my dear lady Woodville, that I most impatiently long for a line from her, and that I mutually congratulate her lord, and her on their recovery. I am, dear Fanny, your's sincerely.

F. STRAFFON.
L E T.

L E T T E R LIII.

Lady WOODVILLE to Lady STRAFFON.

WHERE, Fanny, shall I find words to express my gratitude to the *Almighty*, for the blessings I have received from him? the smallest of which is my own recovery from the grave! Words are inadequate to what I feel, but he can read my heart! Life is a common blessing given to all; and sure there was a time, now long past, when I would most willingly have yielded mine, into his hands that gave it—but happiness, my sister! such bliss as mine is but the lot of few. O how shall I deserve it! teach me, Fanny; teach me every honest art to keep the treasure I have so lately found—lord Woodville's heart.

How little alas! are we capable of judging for ourselves? my lord's late illness, which I considered as the severest infliction of Providence, has been the blessed means of my present and I hope future happiness! his generous nature, struck with the sufferings I endured, by one rich gift has overpaid them all—but I must, dare not enter into the charming detail of my felicity—my spirits will not bear it, but you shall know it all. For the present let it suffice to tell you I have not now a wish ungratified, but that of being able to render myself worthy of the happiness I enjoy.

My lord, lady Harriet, who is a mirror of resignation, and Fanny Weston, all join with me in sincere congratulations to you and Sir John, on Emily's recovery. How truly thankful

ful ought I to be for the dear child's preservation I for indeed I could not have been happy had you been otherwise.

Adieu, my Fanny, I am as ever,

Your's,

E. WOODVILLE.

L E T T E R L I V .

Miss WESTON to Lady STRAFFON.

[Inclosed in the foregoing.]

I HOPE your ladyship will believe me perfectly sincere, when I tell you that I rejoice at lady Woodville's being able to release me from the office of her secretary by answering for herself. For though I am highly sensible of the great honour which your ladyship confers on such a mad-cap as me, by condescending to write to me, I must beg leave to observe *que la rose a sa picque*—for indeed your ladyship's kind and friendly admonitions upon the subject of Sir James Thornton's politeness, and my vanity are rather humiliating. But in order to make your mind, as well as my own easy upon this subject, I will venture to assure you that I shall require stronger proofs of Sir James Thornton's regard than a little flimsy flattery, before I suffer myself love to persuade me that the baronet is enamoured of your ladyship's most humble servant,

F. WESTON.

P. S. Pray, my dear lady Straffon, do not fancy I am in a huff, for I never was in greater harmony of spirits than at present ; having this moment

moment received a letter from Sir James 'Thorn-ton, in answer to an invitation which lord and lady Woodville commissioned me to make, and which he will accept in a few days. It is lucky that flattery costs men nothing, for the poor dear baronet would certainly be a bankrupt if he were to purchase all that he bestows upon

Your ever affectionate

F. W.

L E T T E R -LV.

Lady STRAFFON to Lady WOODVILLE.

LIKE the rich gales from the Arabian coast my Emily's last letter came fraught with health and joy.—What an high cordial must it have been to a fond sister's heart, who long has mourned, without affecting to perceive those secret sorrows which she could not heal, to hear that they at length have vanished?

I KNOW not which of us is at present happiest; but were the charming contest to be determined by the merit of the competitors, the precious palm would be adjudged to you. Long may my Emily enjoy the triumph she so well deserves!

I WILL not, cannot wait for a detail of your felicity; I will behold and share it.—It is possible to be circumstantial under the severest affliction; but happiness is by much too volatile for narrative—like a fine and subtle essence, it evaporates through the activity of its own spirit; we cannot paint the expressive looks which are lighted up by a glad heart; the eye alone can catch the brilliant beam, which brightens by reflection—

Therefore

Therefore expect to meet mine in less than four and twenty hours after you receive this. Sir John and my girl will accompany me.

I HAVE had a very pleasing letter from lady Somerville.—Lodovico, Laura, and she arrived safe at Genoa; her friends received them all with open heart and arms.—The young people have been entirely taken up with feasts, balls, and masquerades. To avoid giving offence by refusing to partake in these amusements, lady Somerville has retired to the very house which she quitted upon her marriage, which is twenty leagues from Genoa.—She there continues to indulge that melancholy which time has been only able to soften, not subdue—amiable relief!

TELL Fanny Weston that the present harmony of my spirits prevents my answering her letter as I ought; but she must not flatter herself that I do not mean to take any further notice of it; for the moment I become acquainted with Sir James Thornton, I will insist upon his devising a proper punishment for her pertness, and he shall be at once the judge and the executioner.

ADIEU, my dear Emily: I quit you with pleasure, at this moment, to hasten to that of our meeting.

L E T T E R LVI.

Lord WOODVILLE to Lord SEYMOUR.

THE apprehensions which my dear Seymour expresses on account of my silence have been but too well founded—I have been upon the verge of “that undiscovered country from whose

whose bourn no traveller returns." But how do I now rejoice at not having passed the irremeable bounds in a state of insensibility to the virtues of my now truly dear, and I hope happy wife ! she is an angel, Seymour !

I KNOW what true delight these words will give you ; they are sincere, my friend—they flow from my full heart. Blinded as I have been to her perfections, you will surely pardon the transports of a man, who waking from a dream of misery, finds himself in Elysium——such is my present state ; what was my former one, you, and you only, know too well.

You are, doubtless impatient to hear what has brought this happy change ; with pleasure will I dwell on every circumstance, that must endear my Emily to my heart, and render her still more amiable to my friend's eyes.

IT is now above two months since I received your first account of Ransford's duel, and the marchioness's distress. No words can paint the strong emotions of my mind—a thousand various schemes to succour her, rushed instantly through my disturbed imagination. My wife was present while I read your letter, and saw the agitation of my mind. Her delicacy prompted her to retire ; I prevented her, and told her, I know not how of Barnard's death, and begged her to inform lady Harriet of it in the tenderest manner—needless caution.

I THEN told her I would go and acquaint Sir Harry Ransford with the affair ; and ordered my horses to be got ready immediately.

I SET out directly on that purpose——but before I had rode a quarter of a mile, a sudden impulse seized me, a certain foreign and irresistible force, that impelled me to fly to the instant relief of the marchioness.

THE

THE baseness and madness of such a resolve, sprang forward to my view at the same moment, but the passions triumphed as they always must do, at the first onset over the feebleness of reason.

I CONSIDERED, that Ransford might probably call me to account for interfering in his affairs; and felt a gloomy satisfaction in thinking that the loss of life might be deemed an atonement for the cruelty of my conduct towards Emily.

I THEN traversed the road in order to return home through my park, and got into my closet unperceived by my family.

I THERE took out the marchioness's picture and hung it round my neck, as a kind of talisman, against that remorse which I must certainly feel, for abandoning my wife. I then sat down and wrote a letter to my Emily; and though at that time under the influence of the strongest delirium, I am pleased and proud to own, that my tears flowed faster than my ink, while I reflected on the pain which she must suffer when she read those lines.—I resolved to travel night and day, and not put my letter in the post-office till I came to Canterbury.

As I was stepping out of my library, which you know looks into the parterre, I saw my little boy at play, close by the window with his maid.

—The sight of my son, startled me.—

The order of nature seemed reversed — The child admonishing the parent. I felt all this, but felt myself at the same time like one in a dream labouring under an impression of the imagination, without reason to correct, or free-will to controul it. I could not pass into the park without being seen by them;—the private manner of my return would have alarmed the family. I was ashamed to be detected by my
servant,

servant, and spent above an hour, which appeared a summer's day to me, in a state of the most restless impatience. I have since thought, that this little accident seemed as if kindly designed by Providence to give me time for reflection. But alas ! the delay quickened the vehemence of my purpose to pursue my scheme.

THE moment I was at liberty, I flew back to the park, bid my servants follow me, and set off with all the speed my horse could make.—But I had not got three miles from my demesne, when by some *fortunate* accident my horse made a false step, which he was incapable of recovering, and threw me senseless to the ground.

How long I continued there, or what passed, during an interval of one and-twenty days, has left no trace upon my memory ; at the end of that period I awaked, as from unquiet rest.—Gracious heaven ! how shall I ever be able to express my astonishment at beholding lady Woodville seated by my bed-side, the statue of despair ; pale, wan, and faded was her youthful cheek, her eyes were raised to heaven, as if in fervent though in hopeless prayer ! O, Seymour ! what a train of horrid images broke in at once upon my burning brain ; my unsettled reason fluttered on the wing, and seemed as if it would depart again for ever.

THE striking object that appeared before me, impressed my senses with a kind of awe ; yet I had power to speak to her ! she could not answer—A flood of tears, but they were tears of joy, suppressed the power of speech. She was carried out of the room by doctor Fenton's orders, and I then feigned a slumber, in hopes that recollection would afford some clue to lead me through the labyrinth of my situation.

THE

THE first circumstance that presented itself to my memory, was, my having quitted Woodfort with a design of abandoning that amiable creature, whom I now beheld reduced to the state I have already described, by her tenderness for me ;—the next thing that occurred to me, was my having had the marchioness's picture round my neck, which I now searched for in vain.—I instantly ordered every person to leave the room except Williams, and demanded from him an account of my present situation, and what was become of the picture which I had placed next my heart ? I could have no doubt of his faith or sincerity—he has lived with me ever since I was a *child*, and loved me as if I had been *his*.

He fell upon his knees by my bed-side, and begged me not to hurry or exhaust my spirits, which he was sure must be extremely weak, as this was the first moment the fever had left me, for one-and twenty days ; during which time he told me lady Woodville had never quitted my apartment for a single hour, nor closed her lovely eyes.

THAT on the night I was brought home, the surgeon had me stripped, in order to know if I had received any wound or bruise in my body ; that he had taken off the picture, and given it to my wife, supposing it to be hers ; and at that time she took no notice of it ; but that he had often since seen her gaze upon it most intently, and sigh as if her heart would break.

He said that Thomas had also brought her the papers which were found in my pockets ; and she gave them all to him, to lock up ; but that Mrs. Winter, her woman, who was present, told her ladyship there was a letter sealed and directed for her, which she took, and left the room.

THAT she returned in a few minutes as pale as death, but never disclosed the contents; though Mrs. Winter took as much pains as she dared to find them out, as she could not conceive what I could have to say to lady Woodville, when I had but just left her.

HE told me, Seymour, that Emily has knelt by my bed-side for hours in speechless agony; has kissed my feverish lips, and bathed my burning hands with her most precious tears; and yet she knew I had inhumanly determined to forsake her! to leave such worth as hers a prey to pining grief and discontent! For whom?—You have too justly named her the most unworthiness of her sex.

YOU may suppose that during Williams's recital, my reason tottered in its feeble seat; but I had still enough left to rouse my slumbering virtue, and to resolve that if I should recover, my future life should be devoted to love, to gratitude, to Emily. This bear me witness, heaven! I had determined before I knew, or even thought it possible I ever should despise the marchioness.

As soon as I heard all that Williams had to say, I begged to see my wife. Doctor Fenton absolutely refused my request. I acquiesced upon his telling me she had lain down to rest.

THE next day I repeated my entreaties without success—On the third I became so impatient, that Williams thought it most prudent to let me know the sad truth, which was, that lady Woodville lay dangerously ill of the fever she had caught from me.

I WAS no longer sensible of my own weak state.—The tumult of my passions gave me a momentary strength.—I rushed out of bed upon

upon the *instant* ; never, Seymour, did I experience such *another* ! All lady Woodville's merits, which I had before but coldly admired, appeared to me now in the warmest colours, and rose even to perfection. But when contrasted with my ingratitude towards her, they overcame me.—I sunk into my servant's arms, and shed a flood of tears.

IN spite of all opposition I would be carried into my wife's apartment.—I had resolved to implore her pity, and forgiveness of my past follies, and to assure her of my future conduct, which I could no longer entertain a doubt of ; as the sincere and tender affection I then felt for her, would, I hoped, ensure her happiness, and that I should date mine from her recovery.

THINK of my situation, Seymour, when I approached her bedside—she was delirious ! yet the dear angel knew me though she raved, and in such terms, that her words struck daggers to my heart.—My strength forsook me ; I fainted, and was carried back to my own chamber, the unhappiest wretch that breathed upon the earth.

IN pity to you, I will draw a veil over the wild ravings of my tortured mind, and make you happy by telling you that I am truly so, by knowing that my dearest Emily is out of danger.

THIS letter has been the work of two days ; to-morrow I am to see my wife.—I count the moments, Seymour, and think them hours till then !

I HAVE heard that persons who have been once mad, never recover the perfect use of their reason ; or at least are liable to some returns of insanity. This thought shocks me ! for if I could suppose it possible I should ever again sink into that shameful, that now detested delirium, which

so long possessed me, I would not wish to live another hour—but it is impossible.—My Emily's virtues have subdued my heart, and time instead of lessening, must increase their power.

It is high time that I should condole with you, on the sufferings you have endured from your generous friendship towards the marchioness. The meanness of her behaviour to you, makes me rejoice in the hope of her not being Ransford's wife.—Yet contemptible as her conduct has made her appear even in my once partial eyes, she must not know distress, I mean with regard to her circumstances: and while Sir Harry Ransford lives, it will not be in his son's power to support her in the rank which she has held for some years past.—Let me therefore intreat you to inform me of the event of her law-suit with the marquis of St. Aumont.

BE not alarmed at this request, Seymour. It is not passion, but compassion, that makes me wish to serve her; for I here solemnly declare, that if I were not certain of having intirely conquered the phrensy, which had so long possessed my enfeebled reason, I have still virtue enough left to restrain myself from ever mentioning her name. But the real lustre of my Emily's virtues, have triumphed over the false glare of Isabella's charms, that fatal *ignis fatuus*, which so long dazzled and misled my benighted senses.

I SINCERELY rejoice in your fair vestal's recovery;—may she live to make you happy, as your uncommon situation will admit!

I AM truly concerned for Ransford, and earnestly wish to know what course he has pursued.—I think with you, that he is now in Switzerland; and suppose he has written to you before this time. What is become of lady Ransford?

But

But I forget that you were prevented from seeing her, before you left Paris.

ADIEU, my friend ;—let me once more congratulate you upon my Emily's recovery, and my own restoration, to more than life !

I am, most truly

Your's.

WOODVILLE.

L E T T E R LVII.

Lord WOODVILLE to Lord SEYMOUR.

THE wished-for, the charming interview is over ! but where, Seymour, shall I find words to express the delicacy of my Emily's conduct ? when I would have fallen at her feet, and implored her to forgive my having made her miserable, she caught me in her arms, with that modest sensibility, which accompanies her every action, and said that all the misery she had ever suffered, arose from considering herself as the fatal, though innocent cause of my unhappiness.

THAT she should ever be truly grateful for the pains I had taken to prevent her being wretched, by endeavouring to conceal a passion which she was sure it was as impossible for me to conquer, as it had been to disguise.

THAT she had long known of my attachment to the marchioness, and that her utmost wish for many months past, was to be considered as my first friend ; that she should never make an improper use of my confidence, but that her utmost tenderness should be exerted to sooth the sorrows,

which she could not heal.—— A flood of tears opposed her farther utterance.

I TOOK that opportunity of assuring her, that it was in her power, and hers alone to render me the happiest of men.

SHE wiped away her tears, and gazed on me, with looks of joy and doubt. Let not your kindness, said she, tempt you to deceive me. I feel too well, the impossibility of conquering a fond, a real passion ! but I will strive, my lord.

I CAUGHT her trembling hand, and pressed it to my lips. O no ! I cried, my Emily ! my love ! indulge your virtuous fondness, and deeply as my heart appears to be indebted to you, like a poor bankrupt, it shall give its all though it can never pay you what it owes —— She quickly exclaimed, O I am overpaid in this blessed moment, for years of misery ! your heart ! but can you give it ? is it yours, my lord ?—No, Emily ! unworthy as it is, it is already yours, and shall be ever so.

TEARS and embraces closed this charming scene ; and now with truth, my Seymour, can I boast I never knew what heart-felt rapture was before that hour.

THE conferring happiness, on any creature, is certainly the highest enjoyment, of any human mind ; but the paying it to an amiable, and deserving object, must heighten the sentiment, even to transport.

SIR James Thornton has been obliged to return to England, on account of a law-suit. He purposed keeping himself concealed, but upon hearing of mine, or rather my Emily's illness, he posted down from London, to Sir William Lawson's, and remained there till she was pronounced out of danger. Since that time he had frequent accounts of our recovery, from Fanny

Weston,

Weston, with whom he corresponds in a very gallant stile.

I KNOW *she* likes the young baronet, and as I flatter myself he is cured of his hopeless passion for lady Woodville, or at least, am well assured that he will never presume to pursue it, I have prevailed upon my wife to consent to his making us a visit; but neither his being at Woodfort, or any thing else, shall prevent our going to Bristol in a few days; for though my lovely invalid is surprizingly recovered from her late illness, the shock which her constitution has received, has rendered it almost as delicate, as her charming mind. I will watch over them both, and hope to restore them to their natural state, which is almost perfection.

I HAVE shewn Emily all your letters, and told her the story of my connection with the marchioness, without concealing a single circumstance which passed, either at Paris or York. During my narrative, "I often did beguile her of her tears," they flowed sincerely, when I informed her of the struggles, of my then tortured mind.

I WELL knew that the confession of my past weakness, must give her pain; but I was certain she would receive it as the strongest mark of my present sincerity. The tenderness and delicacy of her expressions, upon this trying subject, have, if possible, raised her in my esteem, by convincing me that her understanding is as excellent, as her heart; and that her mind and person constitute a treasure almost too great for the most worthy man. Sensible as I am of my own demerits, can I ever be sufficiently grateful for such a blessing? but I will endeavour to deserve it, Seymour, by devoting every hour of my future life to her happiness.

SINCE the recovery of my reason, I have received infinite pleasure from playing with my little boy. How could I be insensible to the natural and innocent endearments of such a lovely creature? but I find happiness and pleasure crowding in upon me, through a thousand avenues, that my delirium had rendered impervious to their soft attacks; and I begin to think that I have been *new-formed*, as well as *reformed*, since my redemption.

LADY Woodville, who is sincerely grateful for your kind attachment to her, entreats you will at your return to Paris, endeavour to find out Sir James Miller, and purchase for him either a commission, employment, or annuity, which may be sufficient for his support, as the unhappy man has absolutely refused to accept lady Mount Willis's bounty, from the moment he discovered that it was to her he owed it. There is something like greatness of mind in this circumstance, which renders him an interesting object. What mixtures are we compounded of! You may guess your pay-mistress *incog*.

I IMPATIENTLY long for the pleasure of hearing from you, and am with the warmest affection of friendship,

Ever yours,

WOODVILLE.

L E T T E R LVIII.

Lord SEYMOUR to Lord WOODVILLE.

My dear WOODVILLE,

THIS letter will probably reach England but a few days before the writer of it; but I would

would not for a moment delay pouring forth my acknowledgments, for the sincere pleasure I have received from your two last letters; and my warmest congratulations on the charming subject of them.

Yes, thank heaven, my friend is restored to life, to reason and to happiness! can Seymour sigh while he repeats that sound! O Woodville! my cup has been severely dashed with sorrow, nor has there ~~now~~ yet one joy unmixed e'er reached my heart. Yet let me not complain; my own imprudence formed the fatal web, that has ensnared my peace; the unhappy duel that I fought with captain Beaumont sealed its ruin!

BUT why should I distress you by tracing my misfortunes to their source; it is too much for you to know, that I am wretched—no matter for what cause.

THE length of time that has elapsed since my last letter to you, has been fertile of sad events; which I shall relate to you in as succinct a manner as I can.

WHEN I had been about a week at Bellevue the good old general was attacked with a disorder in his stomach, which had most alarming symptoms. He was sensible of his situation, but seemed to wish to conceal it from his children, who vied with each other in their tenderness and affliction for him. It is impossible to do justice to their merits, or describe the affecting scene.

AT the end of twelve days he expired, and left the most disconsolate family I ever beheld: but Charlotte's grief surpassed even credibility. Neither her brother, sister, nor I, could prevail upon her to leave the chamber where the body lay, till the moment it was to be interred. She passed the nights and days, in prayers and tears

—Judge what I suffered from my apprehensions for her.

As soon as the funeral was over, she requested that we would indulge her with the liberty of passing a few days without interruption in her chamber. We had no right to trespass on her grief; but yet our fears for her too delicate constitution, made us reluctantly comply with her desire.

ON the fourth evening of her retirement she sent for madame de Carignan, who flew to obey her summons, but returning in a few minutes to captain Beaumont and me, with an air of distraction, cried out, our miseries are but begun, O hasten quickly, or her angelic spirit will be fled! And can I paint the sad, the solemn scene! no, Woodville, no! it will live for ever, graved upon my heart—but words would wrong my feelings.

CHARLOTTE! my once beloved, my now adored and fainted maid! sighed out her soul to heaven.

Grief will not kill us, Woodville, or I should not survive to tell her death—I can no more.

Adieu, my friend.

SEYMOUR.

L E T T E R LIX.

Lord SEYMOUR to Lord WOODVILLE.

My dear WOODVILLE,

IT was impossible for me to have added another word to my last letter. I have but a very few more to say with regard to the Beaumont family, and then the dear, the fatal name

name shall no more pass my lips, but remain treasured up in my sad heart, a precious hoard for everlasting grief to brood upon.

I TOLD you in some of my former letters, that captain Beaumont visited me every day, during my confinement in the Chatelet. He there beheld and became enamoured of the fair Maria D'Angueville. When he had been about ten days at Bellevue, he acquainted me with his passion, and intreated me to speak to his father upon the subject. Accident prevented my having an opportunity of obeying him, till the general's illness rendered it improper—and the real affliction which he has since felt, seemed to have quenched the new enkindled flame.

BUT a few days after our return to Paris, he again re-assumed the subject, and begged me to apply to his fair cousin and his uncle, for leave to pay his addresses, to her. I told him truly that the situation of my mind rendered me totally unfit to be the ambassador of love or joy; but that I was determined before I should leave the Chatelet, to return thanks for the humane and generous treatment I had met with from the governor and his family, and to intreat Maria's acceptance of the legacy which her uncle the general had bequeathed me of twenty thousand livres.

I THOUGHT that captain Beaumont appeared displeased at my intention; as he coolly replied, that he did not want a fortune with his wife, and thought I had better bestow the legacy I did not chuse to accept, upon some of the younger children of the family, who might possibly stand in need of my bounty. I told him that Maria's likeness to his beloved sister, had made her the principal object of my present attention, and that

that I would put it in her power to dispose of the sum in question, as she thought proper.

SOON after this conversation the captain withdrew, and remained for several days so entirely absorbed in grief, that I reflected not upon the unkindness of my friend's conduct, who neither came nor sent to me for near a fortnight.

AT length he entered my chamber one morning without being announced, and found me gazing so intently upon Charlotte's picture, that I saw him not till he exclaimed with a voice of distraction, What unmerited affliction and distress has the unhappy Seymour brought on all the Beaumont race?

THOUGH the severity of this reproach might have roused my resentment at another time, I was so much softened by the object then before me, my angel Charlotte's face! that bursting into tears, I answered—O Beaumont! cannot grief like this atone for my involuntary crimes? and does my friend upbraid my misery?

AT these words he rushed into my arms, and cried, forgive me, Seymour. Then started wildly from me and went on—but wherefore flow these tears upon a senseless object, lost and forgotten in the grave, when there is now a fairer and kinder maid ready to heal your sorrows?

I COULD not avoid expressing my astonishment at this unintelligible discourse, and it was a long time before he explained himself, by telling me that the lovely and innocent D'angueville had conceived a passion for me during the time I remained a prisoner in the Chatelet; and that upon being pressed by her father and mother to receive her cousin's hand, she had declared that she would rather pass her days in a cloister than with any other man but lord Seymour. I was extremely affected with this intelligence, as it concerned

concerned my friend, the unhappy girl, and my own honour.

I ASSURED captain Beaumont, that I never had spoken to her upon the subject of love, or made the least attempt to gain her affections; and that I was ready to do every thing in my power to assist in conquering Maria's weak partiality to me, that might not injure her delicacy or my own character.

THE frankness and sincerity of my manner, soon got the better of his ill-grounded suspicions; he asked my pardon a thousand times, for having entertained a doubt of my affection to his dear dead sister; but hoped, as I had been myself a lover, I would forgive his rashness.

IT was at last agreed upon between us, that I should write to Maria directly, and acquaint her with the real state of my heart, which must be for ever incapable of love for any earthly object; that I should not see her before I left Paris; and at my setting out, should take an everlasting leave of her by letter. That neither her father, nor any other person should press her to marry, till time and reason might enable her to triumph over a passion which opposition would certainly increase. That captain Beaumont would continue his assiduities, without mentioning his love.—That she should not know of the present I designed her, till a year was elapsed; but if at that time, she refused to marry captain Beaumont, I should be at liberty to put her in possession of the twenty thousand livres, and that she should be allowed to dispose of them as she pleased.

THIS affair thus settled, my friend took his leave with a thousand acknowledgments for what he called a sacrifice, and I sat down to fulfil my promise of writing to Maria—when Wilson announced

nounced a very unexpected visitor; it was madame de St. Far, the marchioness's mother, whom I had never seen or heard of since the time that you first became acquainted with her daughter.

SHE was then, you may recollect, an agreeable figure, rather comely than handsome, and plumper than the generality of her country women. She is now emaciated to a skeleton, and I could not help feeling some apprehensions, that she would expire before she left my apartment, as she was frequently much agitated during the time she staid.

SHE told me, that her daughter had suffered her to want even the common necessities of life, and had absolutely refused to see her from the moment she became a widow. Though I detest the marchioness, I could not avoid observing to madame de St. Far, that I imagined the first part of her accusation, must be unjust, as she had formerly appeared in the world, as a woman of fortune; and therefore must certainly be able to support herself independent of her daughter's bounty.

SHE told me I was much deceived, and as she had no longer any terms to keep with the ungrateful marchioness, she would reveal her real situation.—She then informed me, that she had lived for several years with a monsieur de Verville at Dijon, by whom she had Isabella; that at length by the persuasion of his friends, monsieur de Verville determined to marry, and parted with her and her daughter; but allowed them a decent support, and took every proper care of his child's education.

THAT as she grew up extremely handsome, madame de St. Far determined to bring her to Paris, in hopes of making her fortune; and for that

that purpose assumed the name she now used, and endeavoured to appear like a person of distinction. That the marchioness was perfectly acquainted with their circumstances, and readily entered into the scheme; but in order to carry it on, she was obliged to run considerably in debt, though they were not above six months in Paris, before the marchioness had the good fortune to charm both you and the marquis de St. Aumont.

SHE added, that the only reason her daughter ever gave for preferring the marquis to you, was the probability of becoming her own mistress by his death, for that she knew her own disposition so perfectly, that she was certain she could not confine her affections to any one person long.

O Woodville! what an happy escape have you had from this vile woman! but to make an end of this tedious tale. She told me, that monsieur de Verville died without a will, soon after the marchioness's marriage; and that she was by that means deprived even of the small income which he had allowed her. She implored me to assist her in getting into some convent, where she might pass the remainder of her days without hearing of her undutiful and unnatural daughter. I have desired her to fix upon a proper place for her retirement, and I will readily pay the sum necessary to her admission. I presented her with my purse, and desired to hear from her as soon as possible.

THIS affair, and lady Woodville's commands to find out Sir James Miller will detain me a few days longer in Paris. How earnestly do I long to quit it! yet are not all places alike to the unhappy? no, there is one asylum, and but one, for wretchedness like mine—the peaceful grave!

FORGIVE

FORGIVE me, Woodville, for talking in this melancholy strain, to my now happy friend—may you be long so, is the warmest wish of

SEYMOUR.

P. S. I know not whether I have told you that I have sought lady Ransford in vain, ever since my return to Paris. She quitted her hotel in a few days after Barnard's death, and has left no trace behind her.

L E T T E R L X.

Lord WOODVILLE to Lord SEYMOUR.

MY dear SEYMOUR,

YOUR remark, that neither happiness nor pleasure comes to us unmixed, is but too aptly verified in me; for the real and tender concern which your situation gives me, is a strong alloy to that tranquil happiness I should at present enjoy, if the friend of my heart were not wretched.—There is something so uncommonly distressful in your circumstances, that to attempt to lessen your affliction, would be an insult to humanity;—for who that has a heart to feel another's loss, would wish to stop the graceful tears that flow “where reason, and where “virtue o’er the tomb, are fellow mourners?”

I AM sorry for captain Beaumont's disappointment in love, but I have infinitely more pity for the

the young and innocent Maria. You and I both know how difficult it is to struggle with the first fond impressions of the heart; and women in general, from a principle of delicacy are much more inclined than men, to cherish their first passion, even when hope is fled.

I HAVE a melancholy proof of this truth too near me—poor lady Harriet Hanbury! She still laments the unworthy Barnard, and I fear will soon follow him to an untimely grave,—while Sir James Thornton seems to have transferred the passion he felt for lady Woodville to Miss Weston, who kindly receives his vows, and will, I hope, soon crown his wishes.

I CANNOT help being extremely shocked at the infamous conduct of the marchioness towards her mother.—Why need we become volunteers in vice? Our passions but too strongly and frequently impel us to break the bounds prescribed by virtue; but then those passions may, I humbly hope, in some degree alleviate our transgressions; but her unnatural behaviour to the unhappy woman who gave her birth, admits of no extenuation. This could not have proceeded from any passion, and must therefore be a double vice.

I am, however, much better pleased to owe my cure to Emily's virtues than to Isabella's vices; as the knowledge of the former are a perpetual source of happiness to me, while the discovery of the latter must for ever reflect on my own weakness, in being so grossly deceived.

MADAME de St. Far's establishment in the convent, must not be at your expence. My Emily! my lovely generous girl! insists on paying her pension. She must not be refused whatever she desires, by Woodville, or his friend.

I MOST

I most impatiently long for your return to England; I wish you would meet us at Bristol, where we purpose going in a few days: for though my Emily is so much recovered, that neither her physician nor herself think she has occasion to drink the waters, I will not be satisfied, unless she does; as I flatter myself they may assist in confirming that health, which her present happiness seems to have perfectly restored.

SIR John, lady Straffon and their daughter, are now at Woodfort; they and my sister Lawson, are to accompany us to the Hot-wells. Lady Mount Willis has lain in at her house in Somersetshire—we are to pay her a visit *en passant*—she has got a son, and is as happy as she is amiable. We are all anxious to know what is become of Ransford, of his step-mother and Sir James Miller: but I am much more so to embrace my ever-valued friend, and if I cannot heal, to sooth his sorrows—may that at least be in the power of Seymour's most affectionate

WOODVILLE.

L E T T E R LXI.

Lord SEYMOUR to Lord WOODVILLE.

YES, Woodville, I will take your counsel, and hasten to lay hold on the possession of the only good that is now left me, your generous friendship! I will meet you at the Hot-wells in a short time; but I will not live in the same house with you, nor return from thence to Woodfort. I know the value of your regards too well, to suffer it to be productive of misery to you, or your deservedly happy wife.—No! Seymour's sorrows

sorrows shall not cast a shade on the bright sunshine of your future days ! nor subject you to the unavailing pain of endeavouring to erase the dark engrained tints of melancholy, which must form the colour of my life to come. Yet I will frequently behold my friend, and with sincere delight, contemplate his felicity.

I HAVE at last had a letter from Ransford. Sure there is a fascination in the marchioness's charms ! He raves and is distracted at her having disowned him as a husband, which she has formally done by her solicitor, in order to recover the remainder of those effects which were confiscated on account of his duel with captain Barnard. She carried her point ; they were restored to the marchioness de St. Aumont, but her creditors have seized on every thing she left. Her husband's nephew has carried his suit against her, but has allowed her an annuity of four thousand livres, while she remains unmarried, in respect to his uncle's memory.—I think this income is quite sufficient for her wants, and infinitely beyond her merits. I therefore intreat you to reserve your generosity for some more worthy object.

THE now happy St. Far is settled in a convent at Dijon ; where she proposes leading an exemplary life. Lady Woodville's expence, for she must be obeyed, will not amount to more than forty pounds a year.

ABOUT ten days ago, a monk came to my apartments, and desired to speak with me. He told me there was a lady in the Carmelites convent, who begged to see me upon an affair of the utmost importance to one of my friends. I enquired very particularly who the lady was : he said he knew nothing more of her than that she was an Englishwoman, and was called Jefferson.

He

He added, that at her request he had been often to seek for me, while I was absent from Paris; that he had given up all hopes of meeting me; but rejoiced at his being more fortunate than he expected, and intreated me to obey the lady's summons.

THIS affair would have been matter of speculation to me, if my mind had been sufficiently at ease, to think about it; but without reflecting at all upon the subject, I entered the Carmelite's convent at ten o'clock the next morning and enquired for Mrs. Jefferson.—I did not wait long in the parlour, when a lady dressed in deep mourning approached the grate. I fixed my eyes intently upon her, and knew her to be lady Ransford.—A crimson glow overspread her cheek when she saluted me, and at that moment she appeared a most interesting object.

To save her the trouble of apologizing for sending for me, I told her how much I had been disappointed at not being able to discover her retreat at my return to Paris, and I begged to know if I could be any way serviceable to her; and, at the same time intreated she would inform me, of every thing she knew, in relation to the unhappy affair, between captain Barnard and my friend.

HER tears flowed fast and silent, while I spoke.—When she perceived that I waited for her reply, she took out her pocket book, and presenting it to me, said, your lordship will there find two letters, which will render any conversation with me upon this painful subject, needless.—I commit them to your care, in order that every possible use may be made of them, for Mr. Ransford's advantage. I bear no enmity to his father, nor do I wish to make him an exile from that country to which I never more will return.

I ASKED

I ASKED her with as much delicacy as I possibly could, what scene of life she intended to pursue, and again repeated the offer of my service to her. She thanked me, and said that captain Barnard's death had made her think differently, from what she had ever done before; that she was too conscious of the enormity of her conduct, to think of returning into the world; that she therefore determined to pass her days in a convent, but would always have it in her power to quit it, as she did not mean to make any vows.

I REALLY admired the rationality of her sentiments, and of course approved them; but was ignorant by what means she could be supported, even in a convent; till she assured me, that at her marriage to Sir Harry Ransford, he had signed an article allowing her in case of separation, a power of three thousand pounds, or an annuity of a hundred and fifty pounds a year, during his life; and a jointure of four hundred pounds a year at his death. She said the annuity would be sufficient for her maintenance; that she desired no favour from a person she was supposed to have injured, though the fatal connection, between Sir Harry and her, had been the source of all her miseries.

SHE begged me to forward Barnard's letter to Ransford, and to send copies of it to the captain's friends in England, in order to pave the way for Ransford's return. I promised to obey her, and took my leave; as I now must of you, in order to hasten my setting out.—You will probably hear from me once more, before you see your unhappy, but

Truly affectionate,

SEYMOUR.
L E T.

L E T T E R LXII.

Lord SEYMOUR to Lord WOODVILLE.

Amiens.

I HAVE at length taken an everlasting leave of Paris, and have got so far on my way to my native land, but without being sensible of that charming enthusiasm, which is stiled the *Amor Patriæ*, and which I believe has been oftner described than felt by voluntary exiles, for I confess that I have very little idea of local attachments; persons, and not places, have engrossed all the affections of which my heart is capable; and though the sight of Albion's chalky cliffs, may not inspire me with much delight, I shall certainly feel true pleasure, when I behold my dear Woodville and his amiable wife.

I SHOULD not stop on my journey to tell you this, because I am sure you must know it untold, but my worthy, my faithful Wilson, whom I have long considered as my friend, though he still acts as my servant, left Paris with a slight fever on him: travelling has, perhaps, increased his malady, and I purpose halting here till he is quite recovered.

I GAVE you an account of my interview with lady Ransford, in my last, and will now inform you, of the purport of those letters, which were found in captain Barnard's pocket, after the duel. That which was addressed to her ladyship, was filled with tender adieus, and soft contrition for having involved her in distress, and leaving her probably exposed to misery in a foreign land; with the most solemn intreaties not to prosecute

Mr.

Mr. Ransford in case he should survive, as he there acknowledged, that he had drawn the duel on himself.

THAT which he wrote to Ransford was short, yet contained the fullest declaration, of his having sought the quarrel, and its consequences, from a weariness of life, which he said must be for ever embittered, by reflecting on the baseness of his behaviour towards lady Harriet Hanbury, as well as on the unworthy part he had acted, in seducing lady Ransford from her duty. He implored his forgiveness for the injury he committed against the honour of his family, and for having engaged him to hazard his life, from a too earnest desire of getting rid of his own.

How inconsistent is the conduct of this unfortunate man! his attention to the preservation of his antagonist's life, is certainly noble; but what an act of inhumanity was it to lay Ransford under the fatal necessity of becoming his executioner? or how are we to reconcile the spirit of this last action, with the unworthy tenor of his former life?

I AM convinced there is no human creature so intirely lost to virtue, as not to be possessed of one good quality at least, which if known, and properly cultivated, might in some measure counterbalance its owner's vices to society; but we are all too apt to reprobate a faulty character; too indolent to search out the latent virtues of another's heart; and find it more for our ease, to take it for granted, that a vicious person must be vicious throughout, than to seek for a grain of wheat in a bushel of chaff.

AFTER many fruitless inquiries, I am informed that Sir James Miller has obtained a commission in the Hungarian service, by some of his friends here, and that he left Paris about three weeks ago,

ago, in order to join his regiment. Ransford is at Brussels, but the marchioness and he do not live together. I have forwarded Barnard's letter to him, and flatter myself we shall soon see him in England.

My parting with the dear remains of the Beaumont family was truly affecting, madam de Carignon came to Paris, on purpose to bid me adieu. Captain Beaumont presented me with his and his father's pictures; he had before given me Charlotte's portrait.—Alas! it was an useless gift, as her dear image is too strongly graved on my sad heart!

I WILL not dwell upon this subject longer; but it is impossible that I should turn my thoughts to any other now.—I can therefore only say,

Farewell.

SEYMOUR.

m
F I N I S.